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IS 3RD EDITION DEAD? FIRST LOOK PAGE 20

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Editor-in-Chief: **Jesse Decker**
Art Director: **Lisa Chido**
Associate Editor: **Matthew Sernett**
Associate Editor: **Stacie Magelssen**
Living Greyhawk Editor: **Erik Mona**
Circulation Director: **Pierce Watters**
Director of Prod. & Manufacturing: **John Dunn**
Prepress Manager: **Matt Beals**
Senior Production Designer: **Theresa Cummins**
Ad Traffic Coordinator: **Dawnelle Miesner**

Contributing Artists

Chris Appel, Matt Cavotta, David Day, Phil Foglio, Tom Gianni, Karl Kerschl, Chuck Lukacs, John Kovalic, Tony Moseley, James Nelson, Marc Sasso, David Wahlstrom, Aaron Williams, Kalman Andrasofsky

Contributing Authors

Monte Cook, Greg Dent, Johnn Four, Ed Greenwood, Dave Gross, Gary Gygax, Gary Holian, Brandon Hollingsworth, Clifford Horowitz, Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel, Michael Mearls, Rick Moscatello, Rich Redman, Ed Stark, Skip Williams, James Wyatt

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110
Bellevue, WA 98007

Chief Executive Officer
Lisa Stevens

President
Johnny L. Wilson

Director of Marketing and Operations
Mary Franklin

Technical Director
Vic Wertz

Corporate Administrator
Wailam Wilson

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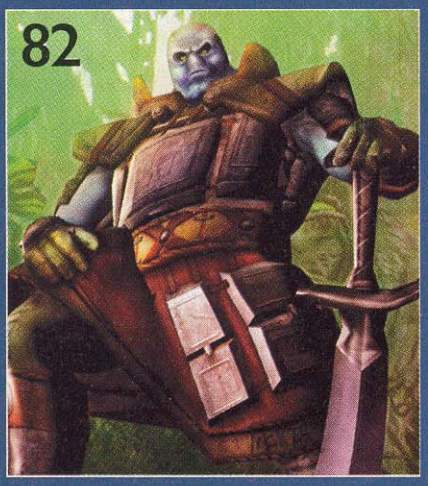

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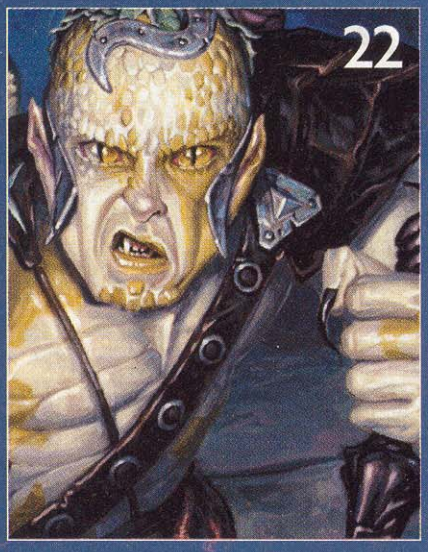

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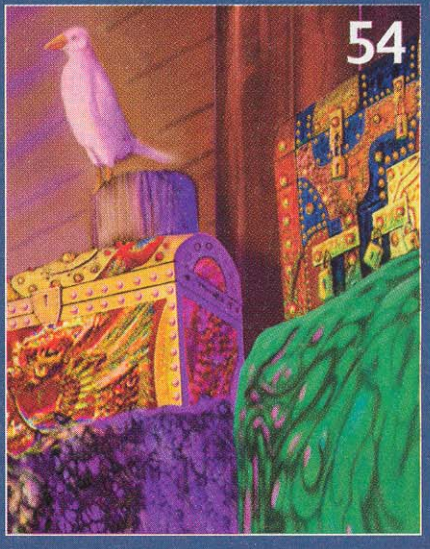

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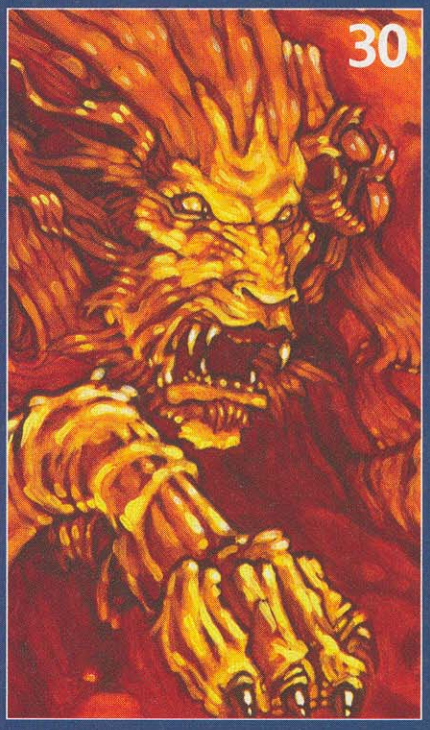

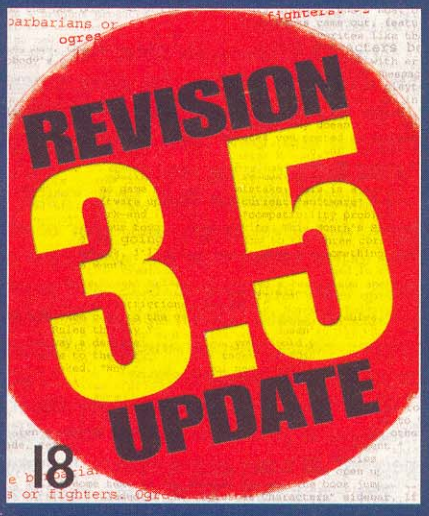

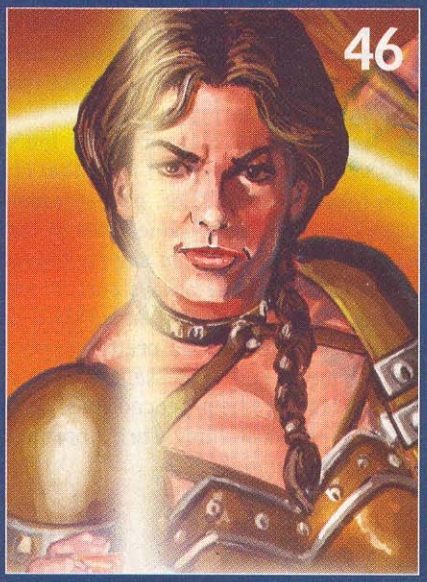

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ESTIMATED CHARACTER LEVELS

In *Dragon* #293 we presented a list of ECLs for the monsters of the *Monster Manual,* and we asked for your feedback. The response from readers in emails, letters, and message-board discussion was amazing! In the new *Savage Species* book, you'll be able to see how *Dragon's* readers helped develop an idea from an article and make it into an integral part of the D&D rules. Some ECLs were changed, and many stayed the same. We'd love to hear what you think of the final product, but before you rant or rave about any creature's ECL, try playing it for a few sessions. In our playtests for this product, we discovered that many monsters had hidden benefits. Jesse's centaur ranger seemed pretty lame—until the cleric climbed aboard! Learning just how good it can be to carry a fellow PC into battle lead us to publish "Saddle Up," an article about intelligent mounts that you'll find in this issue. Keep looking in *Dragon* for more opportunities to give your feedback about such ideas and help shape the future of Dungeons & Dragons.

OGL

For the first time ever, *Dragon* features an article that's open content, according to the Open Gaming License. Check out "Prestige Races" on page 42 and let us know what you think about *Dragon* including such content in the future. Only the "Prestige Races" article is open content. No other content in *Dragon* is open content unless so designated. If you don't know what OGL content is, check out **www.wizards.com** and follow the links to the d20 system pages.

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

Undoubtedly the most popular novel series around the Paizo offices, George R.R. Martin's sweeping Song of Ice and Fire contains a setting and story matched by only a few of the greatest fantasy works. In addition to the upcoming novella that you can read about in the previews for issue #305, issue #307 will feature the series' setting, Westeros, as a D&D setting. In addition to information about using the setting as a campaign world, the issue will include a full-color poster map.

WYRM'S TURN
FROM THE EDITOR

Don't let that sample sheet in the *Player's Handbook* fool you—character sheets are as varied and eclectic as the D&D players we call friends. I've played beside guys who keep every character sheet they've ever made and a few who were less . . . diligent . . . about their characters. I've seen players retype entire sections of the rules onto a home-brew character sheet, and I've seen character sheets so covered in doodles that I wondered if the player ever made an attack roll. I've seen enough gamers to know that you can tell a lot about a roleplayer just by looking at his character sheet, but the good news is that most of our foibles are pretty entertaining. Most of my favorite players have peculiar approaches to their character sheets, and while it's by no means exhaustive, here's a list of the crazy ways I've seen folks keep track of their characters.

Dude, Where's My Sheet? "Oh man, I can't find my character sheet. Did I leave it here?" Wherever this guy's sheet is, it's not at the game. That's OK, he's pretty sure he can remember his stats; anyone remember how many *cure moderate wounds* potions he had?

The Quest. "The perfect character sheet is out there, we must only find it." Those of us on the quest endlessly search the Internet for the newest customized sheet, we tinker with our own custom creations, and we never lose the dream of the perfect sheet.

Tron. "My character sheet has 512 MB of ram and it only weighs 3 ounces. Oh, and while we play, I'm going to watch the *Fellowship of the Rings*." We might all be this guy if we could afford laptops or if our DMs would kindly provide an Ethernet hub. Until then, I guess we'll just have to make sure someone remembers to bring real dice.

I Must Reference Page 17-B. "Yeah, I made this sheet myself. I listed my spells by school, level, range, and color of effect." Maybe the ultimate expression of The Quest rather than it's own brand of sheet, this guy's got a separate page for skills, feats and their effects, and possibly even retyped spells.

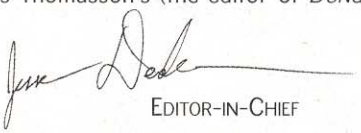
Secret Sheet. "Don't look at my sheet." Because of an unbroken succession of rogues, ninjas, shapechangers, evil characters, and the like, you're just not allowed to look at this player's sheet.

The Player. "I photocopied the sheet from the *Player's Handbook* and wrote in mechanical pencil. What's the big deal?" While this approach might not be as peculiar as some of the others, it makes for a fine D&D game.

The Pizza Guy. "Look, dude, that one's from the Twinkie Jeff sat on." What you call a character sheet, the Pizza Guy calls a coaster, figuring that it's not really a character sheet unless it has character. This sheet is a living record of meals shared, drinks spilled, and crossed-out hit point totals, and the best part about such scars is that they make ready hooks into stories about the session that inspired a particular stain.

Plastic Wrap. "You cannot mar the sheet; it is safe from your pizza and your evil, soda-spilling ways." I think that character sheets might be the real reason that those plastic-binder, page-protector things exist at all. These players conveniently use the same kinds of markers that DMs need to write on battlemats, and they can save a disorganized DM a lot of time.

Personally, I have always sort of aspired to have the Plastic Wrap kind of character sheet, but I've ended up a slow progression from the Pizza Guy to The Quest, and now I'm pretty clearly headed in the direction of Tron. If you'd like, chime in on the message boards at **www.wizards.com** and describe your own character sheet peccadilloes (or those of your friends). I'll send the writer with the funniest entry Chris Thomasson's (the editor of *Dungeon*) beat-up *Player's Handbook.*



Editor-in-Chief

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URBAN ADVENTURE

REVISION UPDATE
by Ed Stark
Check out the changing face of D&D in another of Ed Stark's articles about D&D 3.5! Find out how your questions and feedback translate into improvements to the game.

ARMS OF THE KRAKEN
by George R.R. Martin
Best-selling fantasy author George R.R. Martin appears in the pages of *Dragon* for the first time with an exclusive exerpt from his upcoming novel "A Feast for Crows." More than just an exerpt, the story is a complete novella in its own right.

CITY TILES
illustrated by Mike May
We were able to put something special in this issue: a huge 2-sided, miniature-scale poster map. On one side we present a city street for urban battles, and on the other we give you the seedy side of every city: the adventurer's favorite, the sewers! If you pick up *Dungeon* #97, you can use both issue's premiums together to create a huge tabletop map for city combats. Change the two maps' orientations, and you can create a different map for fights or chase scenes in another neighborhood. Grab your miniatures and your monster chits and get ready to rumble.

THE SECRET LIFE OF YUAN-TI
by Robin Laws
Some sinister secrets of the shadowy yuan-ti surface in this issue's "Secret Life." Author of the "Secret Life of the Drow" and prolific game designer Robin Laws weighs in with new information about this ancient D&D race.

CITIES OF THE PLANES: N'GATI
by James Jacobs
Dragon kicks off a new series with an article about the Astral city of N'gati. You can use N'gati as a site for exotic adventures or a base of operations for journeys through the Astral Plane and the rest of the multiverse. This and future "Cities of the Planes" articles will provide you with unique locations and new ideas you can use as is or incorporate into your game world to make it a more wondrous place.

URBAN TRAPS
by Penny Williams
Wizards of the Coast R&D veteran Penny Williams presents traps you can use . . . in your own homes! Use these magic items and machines to rogue-proof your home base and keep your cohorts safe.

READERS TALK BACK
SCALE MAIL

Wait . . . Did we Plan this?

I was reading a letter in issue #301 with a question regarding the number three encasing the "g" in the *Dragon* logo, and I suddenly wondered why there would be a zero around the "o." Soon after this, I heard the story on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" about the 30th anniversary of Dungeons & Dragons, and it clicked. I suppose D&D has come a long way to get a 5 to 10 minute feature on public radio. Now, what happens next year when D&D turns 31?

David E. Ferrell
Pelham, AL

As soon as D&D turns 31, check the 31st word of every article in all issues with prime numbers that are also divisible by three. Once you've got the message, follow the instructions and . . . oh, never mind. There's nothing there, nothing at all.

Jesse Decker
Editor-in-Chief

Disc Tron

I have a few ideas to share with some fellow gamers. I digitally create my maps on my computer, and then I download the maps, NPC and monster statistics, and some D&D reference material to my PDA. I can manage everything from my PDA without having to hide behind a DM's screen. I can see everything my players are doing and run the game. I was hoping you could give me some feedback on this and pass the idea on to your readers.

Eryk (aka Orcith)
Address withheld

Not Too Shabby

I want to complement you on several articles. "Campaign Components: Swashbucklers" by Travis Stout (issue #301) was a great addition to "Adding Insult to Injury" by Robin Laws from issue #294. When I first started to read the article, I told myself that I'd have to go back and find that article on great quips. A page later, you gave me the title, issue, and page number. What more could a reader ask? On top of that, you gave enough detail on each part of the article that I had the idea of how to play it, without beating the subject to death. I can't wait for my character to swash his buckle.

"A Clutch of Cantrips" by Kieran Turley and S. Deniz Bucak (issue #302) was funny yet enlightening. "Magical Side Effects" (also by Kieran Turley in issue #302), added a little harmless flavor and color to my campaign (play on words intended). Finally, "Arcane Armor" by Johnathan Richards (not Kieran Turley but still in issue #302) will baffle my players for hours.

P.S. No, Kieran Turley is not paying me to keep mentioning his name.

Bryan Cooper
Riverside, RI

P.P.S. Kieran Turley isn't responsible for the extra fifty dollars in my checking account. I swear.

P.P.P.S. Did I mention that Kieran Turley has a really cool article on alchemy in issue #301?

Stacie Magelssen
Associate Editor

You Have a Problem

Oi! Have I got a rib-poker for you! I run a campaign as a DM and player, but mostly as DM. I give my players the chance to DM once in awhile, and the adventure content is pretty good, but their descriptions and rule enforcement are horrid. I, on the other hand, am an amazing craftsman of all things in the D&D world. Yet as much as I might describe something, I don't think my players are getting it. They don't act the part of a rogue or wizard. They just describe actions for the part. I don't know what else I can do. I've done almost everything to get a real feel for the game, and I enjoy

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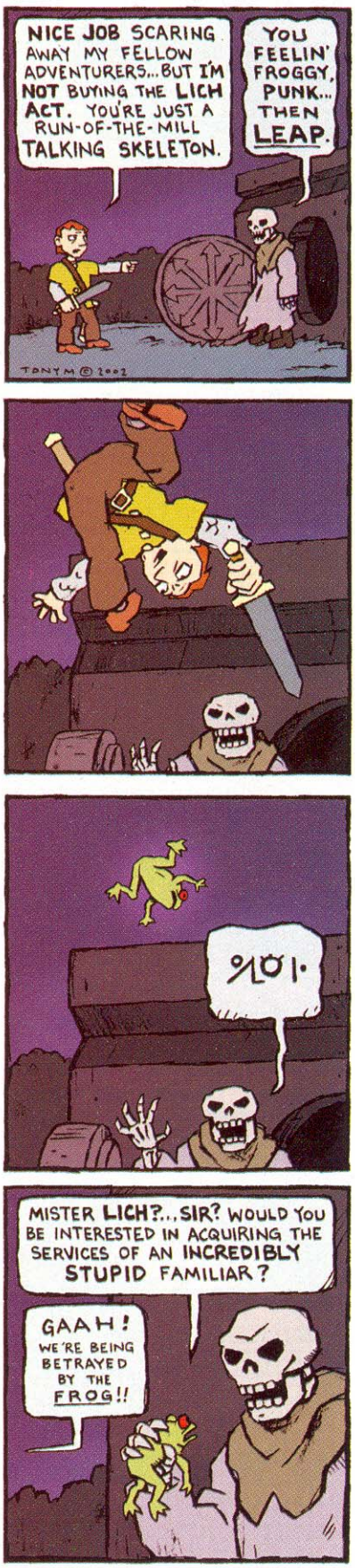
ZOGONIA
NICE JOB SCARING AWAY MY FELLOW ADVENTURERS... BUT I'M NOT BUYING THE LICH ACT. YOU'RE JUST A RUN-OF-THE-MILL TALKING SKELETON.
YOU FEELIN' FROGGY, PUNK... THEN LEAP.
TONY M © 2002
9/01
MISTER LICH?.. SIR? WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THE SERVICES OF AN INCREDIBLY STUPID FAMILIAR?
GAAH! WE'RE BEING BETRAYED BY THE FROG!!
BY TONY MOSELEY WWW.ZOGONIA.COM

playing it more than I do DMing, but I'm the only good DM! Help!

Lou Petrucci
Address withheld

Ah, you've come to the right place for advice, young padawan. By continuing to lead a perfect example, your pupils will also learn to one day be amazing craftsman of all things in the D&D world. Remember that patience with those who are less capable than you is the best teacher of all. They are your lesser, and by their very inexperience, they deserve your pity, not your frustration.

And stop poking people in the ribs. That's bound to make enemies.

Stacie Magelssen

One Small Step for *Dragon* . . .

Kudos to *Dragon*. I just wanted to say that I was pleasantly surprised with issue #301. I don't normally read the Living Greyhawk section of the magazine, because I don't play in the setting, but I read it in that issue, and what did I discover? You guys actually had gay characters in there! This meant a lot to me as a gay gamer. It's hard to explain exactly how discouraged one can become with D&D when most of what you see and read in source material deals with scantily clad, large-busted women—not to mention putting up with all of the juvenile homophobic crap many immature gamers can toss at you.

I had a lot more I wanted to say, but I have to get to work. Thanks for including us, and I think it would be great to see a gay hero sometime . . . without the "slightly effeminate" descriptor attached.

Dan Klinestiver
Address withheld

I must admit, I felt a little trepid about the gay relationship alluded to in that issue's Living Greyhawk section. It didn't bother me that a homosexual character would be presented, and to the rest of the staff's credit, it wasn't even an "issue" that needed to be discussed. But it worried me that the first allusion to a gay relationship in Dragon would occur between characters who might be considered villains. Too often in literature and visual media, homosexual people have been vilified or reduced to caricatures, and I didn't want Dragon to contribute to that ugly history. I considered how the character was presented, and then I thought of it this way: Would it bother me if Dragon published the same article but alluding to the character's heterosexual love? With that psychological hiccup out of the way, I was proud to see Dragon take this small step toward equality. The real kudos should go to Erik Mona, editor of Polyhedron and author of the article, for having the chutzpah to write it that way in the first place.

Matthew Sernett
Associate Editor

Troll Trouble

The article about trolls in issue #301 suggests using the *bestow curse* spell to bring a troll's Intelligence or Charisma down to zero and thus put it in a "coma-like stupor." I've had many characters who would have dearly loved to use the spell that way, but I have always interpreted the spell description as disallowing any ability to drop to zero. The spell description (page 178 in the *Player's Handbook*) says you can choose a "-6 effective decrease to an ability score (minimum 1)." Doesn't that "minimum 1" part mean that you can't use the spell to drop a score to zero?

Kristi St.Clair
Winder, Georgia

D'oh! We should have caught that one. Kudos to Kristi, too.

Matthew Sernett

Lighten Up About Darkness

Just thought I'd drop you a note to tell you how much I've enjoyed the last few issues. The new ecology articles rock! Whoever came up with this idea deserves a raise. I found more useful content in those two articles than in all those before, and I didn't even have to strain my eyes to read footnotes! The article in #302 about large combats was great too: The index-card idea will become a permanent part of my bag of tricks. I especially like that this system is useful for any size encounter. The whole article is full of great advice and is just the sort of thing I'd like to see more of! I also loved this installment of "The Play's The Thing"—a new way of portraying magic and making it come alive in the players' minds! As a DM

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DUNGEON #97

LIFE'S BAZAAR
by Christopher Perkins
The *Dungeon Magazine* Adventure Path begins with this adventure. The PCs start in the troubled city of Cauldron and quickly become embroiled in the city's darker side. Some children have gone missing from the local orphanage—the latest in a string of strange disappearances. It's up to the characters to brave the dark underside of Cauldron and discover what has happened to the city's missing citizens before more people vanish. A D&D Adventure Path module for four 1st-level PCs.

HEART OF THE IRON GOD
by Campbell Pentney
An ancient, massive construct has appeared in the land, destroying villages and sending people fleeing from their homes in a panic. Now it's heading in the direction of a major port city, and it must be stopped before the slaughter can begin. This colossus isn't all it appears to be, however. Troops stream from its feet in battle, and arrows rain from tiny slits in its torso. If the creature is indeed some sort of colossal troop transport, the situation might be even more dire than originally suspected, and only the PCs can infiltrate the device and put a stop to its rampage. A D&D adventure for four 13th-level PCs.

DEMONBLADE
by Hank Woon
A vain and greedy prince is willing to sacrifice his kingdom for the power of the Demonblade. But when he finally gets his hands on the weapon, he discovers too late that the blade is much more than he bargained for. Is the price of a soul a fair trade for immortality if your essence is subsumed by evil? A D&D adventure for four 16th-level PCs.

This issue is the last bi-monthly *Dungeon/Polyhedron.*

POLYHEDRON #156

DOGFACE
Load up your rifle and enlist for Dogface, a stand-alone d20 game of World War II combat. Lead a band of troops up Omaha Beach, storm the streets of Stalingrad, or liberate a Pacific island from the clutches of the Empire of Japan. Dogface casts players in the role of infantry, allowing you a ground's eye view of the war that shaped today's world. Designed by Origins Award-winner and Green Ronin publisher Chris Pramas, the game includes more than a dozen new feats, rules to simulate basic training, and a modified combat system with expanded rules on cover and modern weapons.

The issue also includes the final installment of Dennis Detwiller's Godlike comic, a roundup of upcoming d20 products, RPGA news, and more.

without huge amounts of time to spend designing adventures from scratch, I found the advice on running ready-made adventures to be a great boon also. The feature articles were top notch. All in all, this was one of the best issues yet. Hopefully you'll be around for another 300 issues!

Now for a small beef: What the heck is up with all the whiney letters I've been reading lately? Come on folks, lighten up! I didn't see anything that bad about the articles supporting the *Book of Vile Darkness* nor the adventure that ran in *Dungeon*. *Dragon* has always printed an article or two giving players and DMs alike some examples of how they can use new material. It's one of the reasons many people read the magazine.

I am also sick of people complaining that a particular article is useless to their specific games. There are a lot of different gamers that read *Dragon* and therefore a need to publish a wide range of articles. I don't always find every article to be immediately useful, but who knows what direction our game might take?

I am growing more and more and more disgusted with what I am reading in "Scale Mail." I have to wonder what impression the casual reader might get of gamers in general with all the petty grumbling going on!

Once again, I'd like to congratulate the staff of *Dragon Magazine* for the excellent job you've been doing. I am very happy with my new subscription! Keep up the good work!

Mike Berrong
Rochester, NY

Ahem. "Whoever came up with this idea deserves a raise."

I rest my case.

Matthew Sernett

And instead you get "praise." See, it's like a raise, with an extra "p."

Watch everyone, while Matt learns about corporate structure. When Jesse says, "Matt, what do you think we should do with the Ecologies? I'd like to change the format," and Matt says, "I always thought that it should be like this . . ." and proceeds to outline a great new ecology format, then it's really Jesse's idea. You see, Jesse asked, so therefore it was his vision that prompted the change.

Or so says Jesse, along with his new raise.

Jesse Decker D

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

WINNER
"So, Colonel Sanders, we meet again! But this time the advantage is mine!"
Congratulations Barbara Swartz Brus!
Oklahoma City, OK

OUCH!
"Why did the chicken cross the toad?
To get the man inside!"
A. Marini
North Adams, MA

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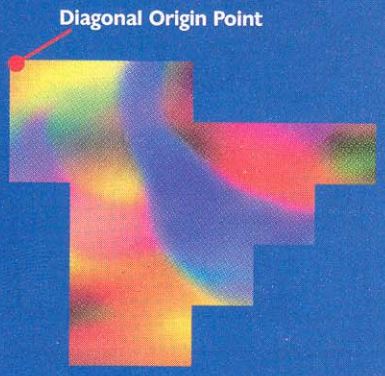
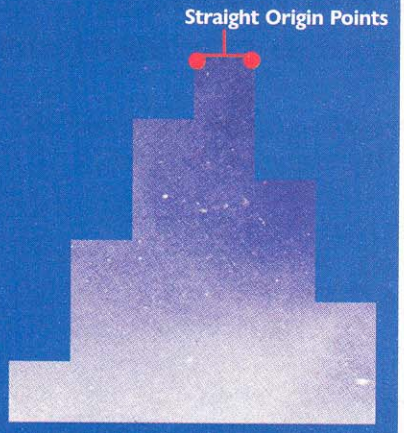
NEW CONE TEMPLATES

The free premium in this issue of *Dragon* is a set of templates for cone effects. The area that a cone covers can be hard to adjudicate, and these templates, which follow the rules outlined in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* should make it easier. Check out the diagrams on the backs of the templates for extensions to the straight and diagonal cones. Let us know how well they work in your games, and if you have another idea for how cones could work in D&D, send an email about it to **scalemail@paizo.com.** Your idea just might find its way into a future product.

The way the cones interact with a grid can be a bit confusing at first glance. One important thing to remember about areas of effect in D&D is that they all center on a vertice, not on a square. To put it more simply, they all center on the spot where four squares come toghether, rather than on a particular square. Take a look at page 68 and 69 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on how the areas work. To use these cones, all you need to do is put them on the grid so that the area they fill lines up with the grid of your battlemat with the smallest corner of the cone starting at any vertice adjacent to your character, just like the cones shown here.





UP ON A SOAPBOX

All I Need to Know I Learned from D&D

Remember the Mission!

by Gary Gygax

Wishes are always dangerous, for the very fact that you get what you ask for—literally. This usually means you get what you want in the most unexpected and undesirable form possible. Yrag, my fighter PC, knew this all too well. He'd seen how some of his comrades had fared after a carelessly worded wish, so when he found a ring with such a power, Yrag was careful. At the time, a *horn of blasting* was his heart's desire, so he wished that he might discover where such a precious magical item was located. By making such a wish, he figured that it would more likely be granted, as to gain the item, he'd actually have to do so through dint of adventuring; he'd have to earn the prized item.

So began the long adventure in quest of the mighty device, an instrument whose magical winding could bring down the wall or tower of a stronghold opposing his military advance. It should go without saying that at this juncture in play, the principal focus of Yrag's ambition was carving out a demesne of his own to rule over and direct.

Upon uttering his wish, the fighter saw a map being blown along through the vegetation, a brisk breeze carrying it away rather quickly. After considerable exertion Yrag managed to get a hold of the parchment, smooth it out carefully, and study its markings.

Of course it was a map of a locale not too far distant, a ruin drawn upon its stained surface. Getting there was a matter of outdoor adventuring, facing and defeating various hostile encounters, then recovering lost hit points and forging on. Without undue delay or any overwhelmingly difficult challenges, the determined warrior gained the place where "X marked the spot." It was a ruined stronghold, and in it were yet more challenges for Yrag to overcome. Faced with traps, dangerous puzzles, and deadly foes, Yrag managed to win through the lot. Finally, he came to a vast place littered with hydra bones. His first thought was that the bones must animate. Then he figured that some unseen enemy, an invisible monster, must make its lair there. One by one, however, all of his questions were determined in the negative. For once, Yrag was stymied. After much contemplation, Yrag finally noticed an inscription on a stone lintel above one door. It consisted of two letters only: HB.

The befuddled fighter decided that the inscription stood for "Hydra Barracks," and that his prize must lay in some other spot. Thus, he went searching elsewhere for hidden places, concealed rooms, secret doors—anything to lead him to the place where the *horn of blasting* might lay. Alas, all such searching was fruitless, and the dejected Yrag left the ruins, much to the amusement of the DM. After all, what clue could be simpler to decipher than the letters "HB" when one was looking for a *horn of blasting?* In the course of battling monsters, dodging traps, and exploring the ruins, Yrag had overlooked the obvious and forgotten his mission, and thus, he'd lost the benefit of his wish. No *horn of blasting* ever made its way into Yrag's hands, and the player concerned (that'd be me), was razzed a good bit by both DM and fellow players who heard about the incident out of game.

All I can add to this cautionary tale is this: Don't allow distractions to cloud the real issue. Remember to stay focused on the mission, and you won't become the butt of others' mirth. To this day, Yrag is enraged whenever he encounters a hydra, alive or dead. . . D

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Nodwick
in:
COMPANY MEN
I DON'T SEE WHY WE HAVE TO SHARE OUR PAY WITH A BUNCH OF MERCS.
BECAUSE THREE PEOPLE AND A HENCHMAN VERSUS ONE ARMY RESULTS IN US GOING SPLAT.
DIDN'T IT OCCUR TO YOU THAT THE REASON KING GLUTINAX GAVE YOU HALF HIS TREASURY WAS BECAUSE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO HIRE SOLDIERS WITH IT?
WAR TODAY! PLEASE FORM LINE HERE.
I WAS HOPING IT REFLECTED OUR GOING RATE...
THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DO HURTFUL THINGS FOR MONEY ARE HERE.
OKAY, MERCENARIES, HERE'S THE DRILL: YOU MARCH OVER THAT HILL AND KILL THE ONCOMING HOBGOBLIN FORCES. YOU'LL BE PAID ON A "PER HEAD" BASIS, SO BRING BACK LOTS OF HEADS.
HOBGOBLIN ONLY?
EH, WHATEVER CUTS DOWN ON PAYROLL IS FINE WITH US.
AND THERE'LL BE MORE COOKIES AND PUNCH WHEN YOU RETURN!
LATER...
HOW'S IT GOING SO FAR?
THEY'RE HEADED BACK.
ALREADY? THAT WAS FAST.
HEY, NO HOBGOBLIN HEADS, NO PAY.
THEY MADE US A BETTER DEAL. THEY'RE PAYING US ONE-THIRD MORE THAN YOU ARE TO LET THEM INVADE.
WE CAN AFFORD TO BEAT THEIR OFFER.
SIGH... FINE.
I CAN SEE WHERE THIS IS GOING...
BIDDING IS NOW 150 GOLD, AN AROMATHERAPY SESSION, AND A DINNER AT THE DON HAGGIS MEATERY PER MERCENARY.
GOING ONCE...
eBay
AUCTIONEERING SERVICES
I BID 200 GOLD PER HUMAN, AND I WILL GIVE THEM THEIR PICK OF THE WOMEN WE TAKE CAPTIVE.
SOLD!
GREAT... A TWELVE-ALE PROBLEM AND ME THIRTY LEAGUES FROM THE NEAREST BAR...
AREN'T THEY GOING TO STOP THE HOB-GOBLIES FOR US?
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR MALE-ONLY HIRING PRACTICES.
HANG ON...
YOU SEE THAT YOUNG LADY OVER THERE?
YEAH. SHE'S A CUTIE.
YOU KNOW SHE MADE THE REFRESHMENTS?
AYE. 'TWAS LIKE TASTING HEAVEN.
IF YOU TAKE THE HOBGOBLINS' MONEY AND LET THEM THROUGH...
IT'LL MAKE HER CRY.
I JUST GOT REPORTS THAT OUR MEN HAVE BEATEN BACK THE HORDE, CAPTURED THEIR HOMELANDS, AND REBUILT EVERY HUMAN VILLAGE BETWEEN HERE AND THE GREAT NORTHERN WASTE!
PLEASE TELL ME HOW YOU DID THIS.
ESSENTIALLY, I JUST PROMISED THEM SOME COOKIES...
MORE DOUBLE-FUDGE CHOCOLATY-CHIPEROO BROWNIES FOR THE FRONT LINES!

REVISION 3.5 UPDATE

by Ed Stark

By now you probably know that a revised edition of the D&D rules will release in July of 2003. In this column, D&D Design Manager Ed Stark looks at what the revision means, talks about why it came to be, and discusses specific changes made to the three core books.

I can still remember the sound the 3rd Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Player's Handbook* made when it first hit my desk. I'd been working from raw computer printouts, loose-leaf stacks of paper, ring-bound pages, and finally actual photocopies of the "PH" galleys for so long that I'd almost forgotten what it was like to look something up in a real book with a hardback binding and color pages.

The impact the book made on my desk was nothing like the one it made on the D&D game and the roleplaying industry. Fans waited for over a year after the "3E" announcement to get their hands on the new books. Then the OGL, the d20 License, and a host of products hit the market. In the meantime, Wizards of the Coast kept official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS products coming. The class books came out, featuring more material focused on PCs than ever. The long-awaited *Psionics Handbook* hit the shelves, and the new versions of old favorites like the *Manual of the Planes* and *Deities and Demigods* arrived. For those who wanted something new, the *Epic Level Handbook* took characters beyond the 20th-level "cap" and created new challenges for everyone.

But, nobody's perfect. We followed up the *Player's Handbook* with errata and even a second printing. You've kept the "Sage Advice" column in *DRAGON* busy in the years since the game came out. Our message boards have hundreds of hits every day, many of which involve questions we could never have foreseen even with the thousands of hours of playtesting we put into the rules.

The idea for the revision to the current DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules was born at a seminar at GenCon. R&D members sat in front of hundreds of excited gamers, all interested in hearing what was new for this new edition of the game only two years after its release. You listened to the plans for new books and talked to us about questions and problems you had running rules in the old ones.

"Why doesn't the *harm* spell have a saving throw?"

"Can't we have a *polymorph other* spell that works?"

"Are the skeleton and zombie templates you posted on the web official?"

"When will you put more errata in the core books?"

We heard all your questions, read all your posts, and listened to our customer service staff. We looked at our beautiful hardcover *Player's Handbooks*, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guides*, and *Monster Manuals*. We sighed.

Back to the computer printouts.

What's it Like?

Over the next few months, this column will focus on specific changes we're making to the game you love—all based on comments and critiques you've given us. We're making a lot of improvements to the game but make no mistake: This is a revision, not a wholesale change of editions. Think of it as a "3.5" edition of the game, much like a software upgrade. Your current "software" (books like the *Epic Level Handbook, Deities and Demigods, Monster Manual II,* and others) will still work—and if there are "compatibility problems," we'll help you through them with rules patches and advice.

We play the game too, and we want all our toys to keep working.

This Month's Samples

Every month, I'll give you some samples of the sorts of revisions and updates we're going to be making to the three core books. I'll discuss the hows and whys of these changes, and I'll be interested in receiving your feedback. I'll always try to give you something from each of the three books on a related theme so you can see what our designers are thinking.

This month, I want to keep things pretty simple, so the theme is Character Generation. You probably won't be too surprised to read that creating characters hasn't changed in the revisions—but we have tweaked some of the races and classes a little bit in response to your feedback. We've also learned a few things about creating characters since the release of third edition.

THE GOALS OF THE REVISION

1. Options, Not Restrictions. The revision takes options presented in support products and provided through player feedback and makes them core to the game.

2. Tools, Not Just Rules. We spend even more effort showing you how to create your own material for the game you play.

3. Rules the Way You Play Them. D&D doesn't make up rules you don't want to use. The revision continues to support the way you play the game—not the way a designer might think you should play the game.

OGRES AS CHARACTERS

Most exceptional ogres are barbarians or fighters. Ogre characters possess the following racial traits:

Abilities: Strength +10, Dexterity -2, Constitution +4, Intelligence -4 (minimum 3), Charisma -4.

Size: Large.

Face/Reach: An ogre has a face of 10 feet, and a reach of 10 feet.

Speed: Ogre base speed is 40 feet.

Darkvision: Ogres can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

Racial Hit Dice: An ogre begins with 4 levels of giant. This provides 4d8 Hit Dice, a base attack of +3, and base saving throws of Fort +4, Ref +1, and Will +1.

Racial Skills: An ogre character's giant levels give him skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) x 7. His class skills are Climb, Listen, and Spot.

Racial Feats: An ogre gains Simple Weapon Proficiency, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatclub), and Medium Armor Proficiency as bonus feats. His ogre levels give him 2 other feats.

Natural Armor: +5 natural armor bonus.

Languages: Common and Giant;

Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Orc, Goblin, Terran.

Level Adjustment: +2. An ogre has an effective character level (ECL) of 6 plus his class levels, so a 3rd-level ogre barbarian would have an ECL of 9.

Favored Class: Barbarian. A multiclassed ogre's racial Hit Dice and barbarian class do not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty.

PHB 3.5: Racial Benefits

You responded pretty favorably to the changes we made to the different core races for "D&D 3.0," but you had several comments about specific races that we wanted to address.

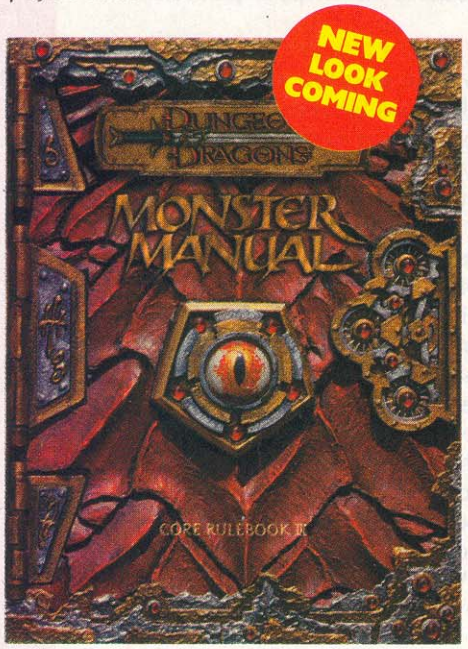
For example, You asked, "Why are these cool new weapons created by a specific race (like the dwarven urgrosh) exotic weapons when the race is famous for making and using them?" We replied, "D'oh!"

So now dwarves have a new ability called Weapon Familiarity with their racial weapons. All dwarves treat dwarven urgroshes as martial weapons. This doesn't make the dwarf cleric any better at using an urgosh—he still doesn't have martial weapon proficiency—but the dwarf fighter gets it for free.

MM 3.5: Monsters as Characters

In the current *Monster Manual,* we provide DMs with a lot of game information on exciting monsters to use in their D&D games. But the usefulness to the average player is limited: If you aren't casting *summon monster* spells or using *polymorph other* to change your friends into hideous creatures, you're out of luck.

In the 3.5 upgrade, certain monsters get what we call the "PHB Treatment." These popular monsters include material on playing them as characters. This isn't as detailed a treatment as you'll see in *Savage Species* (which breaks down individual monsters and turns their special qualities into class-like abilities, among other things), but it does open up a host of new choices for DMs and players alike.



This (among other things) involved adding some text to the *Monster Manual.* The book jumped from 224 pages to 320 pages, and among the new material we created were entries like the material included in the "Ogres as Characters" sidebar.

If the ogre write up here looks a lot like a standard race entry from the *Player's Handbook*, that was the intent. While there are still lots of things to consider before allowing a player to run a monster as a PC—or even before the DM creates a monster NPC from scratch—you will no longer have to reverse engineer such creatures.

DMG 3.5: Prestige Classes

Prestige classes have been a big part of the new edition of D&D, and we wanted to reflect their popularity in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* revision. Fortunately, we added more pages to both it and the *Monster Manual* (all three books will now be 320 pages), so we can incorporate some exciting elements.

We want to better integrate prestige classes into the D&D game based on your feedback. Let's face it—prestige classes were a brand new concept for D&D, and they need a little work. So, not only are we going back and looking at the existing prestige classes in the current *Dungeon Master's Guide* (which will all be making return appearances), but we also looked at the overall concept. Prestige classes fill roles in the game much like the standard classes do. We've segregated prestige classes into the following roles:

Race: These reflect racial choices and characteristics. The arcane archer is an example of an "elf" prestige class.

Party Role: These fill specific needs for an adventuring party or individual roleplaying experience. The shadowdancer, the ultimate sneak, is a party-role prestige class.

Situational: Some prestige classes are ideal to have around under specific circumstances. For example, the loremaster, who can find out just about anything given a little time, is an information-gathering prestige class.

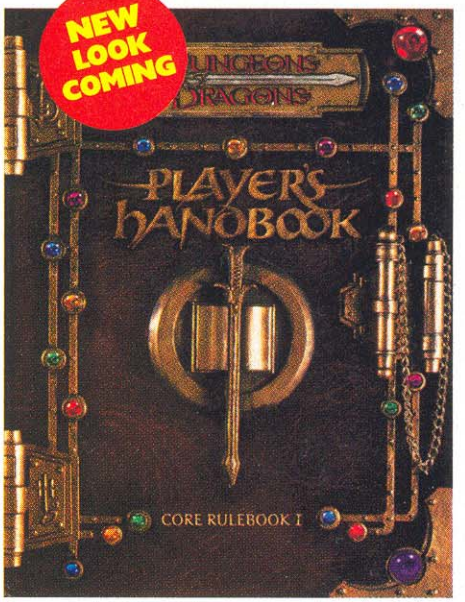
Iconic: Some prestige classes simply have to exist to reflect the nature of fantasy fiction and the game. Yes, this is where guys like the assassin and the blackguard live.

Game Function: Characters with these class levels often have specialties involving esoteric rules or functions. They do things other characters just don't have the capability to do. We brought in the spellsword (a combination arcane spellcaster and melee combatant) to serve this role.

Transformation: Some prestige classes turn your character into something else. It's not always ominous—the monk transforms at 20th level, after all. But the dragon disciple (updated from *Tome and Blood*) turns into a half-dragon-like creature.

World-Specific: Prestige classes can, and usually are, built around organizations or cultures in a particular setting. While you may use any setting for your campaign, we'll give you examples from a few different D&D worlds and rules for how to create your own. The red wizard (a prestige class found originally in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*) makes an appearance in the 3.5 *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This, of course, isn't all we're doing with prestige classes in the revision of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. We'll have prestige classes that appeal to characters from a variety of class backgrounds and plenty of expanded rules for how to create your own. The guidelines in the original *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and in the "How to Build a Prestige Class" article published in *Dragon* #274 are fine, but these have weathered your comments and playtesting.



Check in at our website: **www.wizards.com** if you'd like to see more interesting news and exciting tidbits on the 3.5 revision. I'll be back next month with some more updates and sample material. Until then, good gaming!

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MERCENARIES FOR HIRE

The Nameless Legion

by Mike Mearls · illustrated by Matt Cavatta and Karl Kerschl

They come from across the far corners of the Material Plane and beyond, a lethal fighting machine whose mere presence on the field of battle is sometimes enough to drive an enemy army away in terror. Hated by its opponents and feared by its allies, the Nameless Legion cares little for respect, love, or courtesy so long as its employers pay on time. Assembled from among the most dangerous creatures known to exist, the Legion is a mercenary fighting force consisting of many different monsters and beasts. A small cabal of secretive elven wizards known as the Paymasters recruits giants, medusas, githzerai, and others from across the planes. Using a secret process of psychic surgery, these wizards render their charges obedient to the Legion and train them in the art of war. One can recognize a legionnaire by the intricate tattoos marking his face, which serves as a symbol of his training and obedience.

BACKGROUND

The Nameless Legion recruits warriors from across the known worlds, allowing any mercenary into its ranks who is willing to undergo the psionic conditioning that purges the applicant of much of his past memories. Recruits keep their knowledge of combat, magic, and other marketable skills, but the rest of their memories are forever erased. This alteration extends to a creature's alignment and personality, literally leaving the recruit a new person. Most members of the Nameless Legion are neutral, although a few, usually those with exceptionally sordid or violent pasts, are converted to good alignments. Rarely, a humanoid or other monster who is already of a good or neutral alignment joins the Legion without need for the conditioning process.

The Legion is far from picky when it comes to accepting recruits, reasoning that incompetent warriors will die in battle before they can prove too costly to feed and house. The Legion takes an active interest in recruiting powerful creatures and sometimes dispatches hunting parties to capture trolls, giants, and other combat-worthy monsters for a forcible induction into service.

The Legion's name derives from its members' conditioning: They lose their names along with their memories, gaining new names only after proving themselves in battle. Recruits rarely socialize with non-legionnaires, a state of affairs the Legion likes, and it actively pushes its members to avoid mingling with locals. Thus, to most commoners and even some of their customers, the Legion is an army of nameless warriors. Legionnaires are named for deeds they accomplish during their service or traits that set them apart from others. A perceptive elf might be called Hawkeye, while a lumbering, fat ogre might be dubbed Gutslosh.

The Legion's members are marked by extensive tattoos that symbolize their allegiance and serve to soothe the fears of commoners who normally regard trolls, hill giants, and other monstrous creatures as enemies. These tattoos are magical in nature and give a creature improved abilities in social situations (see the Equipment of the Nameless Legion section later in this article).

THE PAYMASTERS

The Legion is run by a cabal of 12 elven wizards who have mastered the art of journeying between the planes.

Originally concerned with cataloging the planes and their inhabitants, they quickly found they could garner tremendous profits in trade, mercenary recruitment, and other business ventures. The Paymasters' long life spans and business acuity have allowed them to amass a tremendous fortune. When a vacancy opens in the cabal, the remaining Paymasters vote in an apprentice or henchmen of the departed member.

The Paymasters are both neutral and greedy. They care more for maintaining their integrity as businessmen than becoming embroiled in local conflicts between good and evil. As experienced planar travelers, even those Paymasters with a benevolent streak have trouble thinking of any issue confined to a single world as one worthy of risking their business ventures.

Paymasters are able to assume new identities, a situation the cabal uses to its advantage in negotiations, dispatching emissaries with radically different styles of negotiation and debate to hammer out contracts with customers.

The Paymasters rely on their assistants, apprentices, and henchmen to handle most of the Legion's day-to-day business on a particular world, preferring to keep themselves busy with magical research or travel to exotic planes.

ORGANIZATION

The Legion makes its headquarters among the ancient stone ziggurats of a ruined civilization hidden deep within the dense jungle of a small demiplane. It was within these ruins that the Paymasters discovered the secrets of psychic surgery and the magical gates that transport their warriors across the cosmos.

When dealing with the Legion, the Paymasters demand absolute obedience.

When dealing with the Legion, the Paymasters demand absolute obedience, since one unfortunate incident could ruin its reputation. The Paymasters almost invariably side with local nobles or constables in any disputes involving legionnaires. In one incident often talked about in hushed tones among the legionnaires, the cabal calmly ordered the execution of 100 orc warriors to handle accusations of murder and robbery. With the Legion's contract still in place, the Paymasters merely rotated in a unit of hobgoblins and continued to collect their income. To the Paymasters, a small sacrifice today can pay tremendous dividends over the next century as the Legion becomes an accepted military tool on a world.

The Paymasters intentionally cultivate a mysterious image. They wear voluminous gray robes that serve to conceal their faces, hands, and feet, while *masks of the Paymasters* (see the Equipment of the Nameless Legion section later in this article) alter their appearance and voice and help repel the effects of Enchantment spells. Each mask is fashioned to resemble a different animal, and a paymaster goes by a name relating to her personal mask. By merely trading masks, the

Few legionnaires dwell in this place for any length of time unless they are stationed here to receive training. Several wooden barracks house warriors between assignments, while the ziggurats are reserved for the Paymasters. Each ziggurat is home to a particular Paymaster and his personal servants and apprentices, and legionnaires are strictly prohibited from approaching or entering the structures. Defying this edict means instant death for a legionnaire.

Legionnaires are organized into small units called cadres that rarely reach more than 100 members. Each cadre is given a distinct name such as the Blood Feasters, Storm Howlers, or Shield Breakers. Currently, 12 cadres are in active service. This number can change depending on the sort of creatures the Legion recruits and the contracts the Legion receives. While a cadre might serve as a unit on an assignment, normally each one is broken down into smaller groups called lances. The size of a particular lance is determined by a customer's needs rather than a rigid method of organization. They can range in size from a single vampire assassin hired to execute a thieves' guildmaster to 50 ogre barbarians assigned to help sack a besieged town.

The six cadres that see the most service are:

- **The Blood Feasters.** Made up of assassins and slayers, usually undead in nature, this cadre specializes in eliminating specific targets such as generals, nobles, and adventurers. Its symbol is a fanged mouth that drips with blood.
- **The Rune Bearers.** This cadre is made up of sorcerers, wizards, and monsters who possess innate magical talents. Its symbol is a circle inscribed with magical runes.
- **The Shield Breakers.** Warriors who rely on strength and toughness, this cadre specializes in siege warfare and assaults. Its symbol is a greataxe with the shattered remnants of a shield piled beneath it.
- **The Sons of Shadow.** Drow, derro, duergar, dwarves, and other creatures of the subterranean realm serve in this cadre as night fighters and underground specialists, as do creatures skilled in stealth and thievery. Its symbol is a dark cave mouth from which two red feral eyes glare.
- **The Storm Howlers.** Flying creatures are grouped into this cadre and are used as scouts and messengers. Its symbol is a winged lightning bolt.
- **The Thoughts of War.** This cadre is made up of psions and mind flayers, as well as other creatures who are particularly skilled in the tactics of war. It specializes in providing tactical and strategic counsel, and its symbol is a golden skull set on a blue field.

As the cadres each fulfill a specific role, most operations involve lances drawn from two or three different cadres. Rivalries between the cadres can run high, especially among those that fill similar roles such as the Blood Feasters and Sons of Shadow. Each cadre believes itself the most skilled and deadliest in the Legion, a belief reinforced during training, as the Paymasters use these rivalries as a motivational tool. Lances must often work together on assignments, but to prevent them from assaulting one another when their rivalries flare up, they are normally given distinct tasks that keep them from coming into

contact with each other any more than necessary.

Once assigned to a cadre, a creature serves in it until his contract is up, usually 5 to 10 years. Members have their cadre symbol tattooed on their upper arm, and many opt to have a second such tattoo scribed upon their forehead or other prominent part of their body. Individual lances within a cadre rarely adopt unique modes of dress or symbols as these groups are drawn from the cadre in response to a customer's needs and wealth, making them malleable units. A minotaur in service to the Shield Breakers could serve with eight different lances over the course of eight different assignments.

Within the cadre, the uppermost levels of command are reserved for the Paymasters and their direct minions. A Paymaster, or one of her apprentices outfitted with a *mask of the Paymasters,* accompanies each lance, no matter how small. The uncertainty of the commander's actual identity, and the possibility that she might be a Paymaster, is enough to demand obedience from the legionnaires.

Beneath the commander is a captain, who serves as a field commander. The captain is a legionnaire selected for his discipline, intelligence, and loyalty. Warchiefs are ranked below the captain and are officers assigned to command units of up to 20 legionnaires. A warchief is allowed to select up to three warriors under her command to serve as sergeants. Should the warchief fall in battle, her most senior sergeant takes her place until the unit's Paymaster can select a replacement.

OPERATIONS

When the Legion hires on to serve a warlord, it asks for a base of operations separate from the surrounding settlements and other military barracks, and in battle, the Legion operates as a separate, elite unit. A lance of ogres marches alone and is deployed separately from the army with which it fights. While the rest of the army forms up for battle, the ogres hang back as a reserve and prepare to charge into battle to help turn the tide at an opportune moment.

Most legionnaires work as specialists in small bands of two dozen or fewer warriors. These groups never work with their employer's standing army. During a siege, a small group of mind flayers might sneak into a castle to slaughter the fortress's commander and the guards assigned to watch the gate, but once the main body charges into the fray, the mind flayers desert the field.

LEGIONNAIRES

Members of the Legion are granted weapons, armor, and other equipment tied to their skill and abilities. Additionally, over the course of their term of service, most legionnaires earn additional items as booty or as payment. As a rule of thumb, an NPC legionnaire carries equipment appropriate to her character level as listed on table 2–44 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Intelligent creatures that do not have class levels, such as mind flayers and aboleths, receive equipment with a total value determined by their challenge rating. Use table 7–2 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the total worth of such a creature's gear.

Owing to the Paymasters' extensive trade networks and connections, the legionnaires carry a wide range of weapons, armor, and magic items. They may purchase any item listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* at its

listed market price. Legionnaires make an effort to blend in with their surroundings as much as possible. The Paymasters provide armor and clothing based on local design, usually commissioning armor from local shops as part of their contract. However, each individual legionnaire might also carry a few items from his homeland or scavenged from distant battlefields.

A large, intricate tattoo adorns the face of every legionnaire. These magic items serve to aid the legionnaires in social situations and mark them as allies to those who hire them.

Player Characters

Recruits owe the Legion a 5-year bonded term of service in return for escape from their homeland and the conditioning treatment, which assures the recruit that her past can never haunt her. Once this term ends, some legionnaires choose to strike out on their own. Others earn service in a local army, government, or religious order. In return for a sizable fee equal to the total amount of money the Legion could earn from the legionnaire, an individual or group can purchase the remaining duration of a legionnaire's bond. These legionnaires sometimes operate as adventurers under the direction of a religious order or nobleman, or as guards assigned to a specific person or location.

Players who wish to create characters from a species normally considered monstrous, such as a mind flayer or a vampire, can use the Legion as a convenient background to explain their presence in the campaign. In lands where the Legion operates, her tattoos mark her as trustworthy. Of course, this does not mean that commoners like or trust such a monstrous character, but the local guard does not attack her on sight without provocation.

When creating a character who was once a member of the Legion, the character begins play with the standard value of equipment for a character of the race and level selected. As noted above, legionnaires are given equipment appropriate to their talents and experience, and they all receive a *tattoo of amity* (see the Wondrous Items section later in this article).

A player character might choose to maintain her membership in the Legion. In this case, she gains starting equipment as described above, but she does not gain treasure as normal. Instead, she must turn over half of any treasure she earns to her paymaster. In return, she gains free access to magical healing and any spells needed to remove curses and other magical effects. Furthermore, a legionnaire is given free room and board while on active duty. Legionnaires who engage in missions or assignments that do not normally yield treasure, such as defending a holy site against attack, are paid for their services depending on their level. This amount usually equals about 3 sp per level per day, but greater rewards are given to legionnaires who provide exceptional service.

Training

Legionnaires gain access to training and magical resources that grant them talents and abilities unique to the Legion. Within the Paymasters' jungle domain lies many daunting obstacle courses and training halls overseen by the toughest, most demanding instructors the Legion can find across the worlds on which it operates. With this training and the Paymasters' considerable arcane skills, the Legion never wants for unexpected advantages to use against its opponents.

Cryptic Psychology [General]

During your indoctrination into the Legion, the psychic surgery used to change your alignment and purge your memories altered your psyche. As a result, spells designed to affect a creature's mind sometimes fail to work on you.

Prerequisite: Member of the Nameless Legion, Wis 13+.

Benefit: You gain spell resistance equal to 10 + your Wisdom modifier

against all mind-influencing spells. The spell resistance granted by this feat does not stack with any other spell resistance the character already has.

Special: If you are no longer a member of the Nameless Legion, you do not lose access to this feat.

Master of Arms [General]
You have fought on many planes and visited countless civilizations, learning their ways of combat and studying their martial arts. When presented with a strange weapon, you readily master its use.

Prerequisite: Member of the Nameless Legion, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (any).

Benefit: You suffer a -2 penalty rather than the normal -4 when fighting with a weapon for which you do not possess proficiency.

Special: If you are no longer a member of the Nameless Legion, you do not lose access to this feat.

THE LEGION IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

When integrating the Legion into your campaign, the first and most important decision you must consider is its level of activity and acceptance. Do rulers and powerful guildmasters commonly hire the Legion's warriors? Have commoners heard of it, and do they recognize the tattoos that mark its members? If the Legion is well known and at least grudgingly accepted, its members have much more freedom to pursue careers as adventurers. In this case, your players have a lot more flexibility in choosing monster races as player characters. Proudly displaying their *tattoo of amity,* they have the credentials to move among human, elf, gnome, or dwarf society without drawing too much suspicion.

If the Legion has low visibility, monstrous characters gain little from membership in it, as commoners and magistrates do not recognize the Legion's tattoos. A better option might be to make the Legion well known through its actions in the past or through the efforts of a few powerful nobles who employ it. This way, monstrous characters are still rare but they can walk down the street without coming under attack.

It is also important to consider how the Legion moves between the planes. Most of the spells used to transport creatures between the planes, such as *gate* and *teleportation circle,* are at least 8th level. If you do not want such magic to become commonplace in your campaign, you could cast the Paymasters as a network of wizards who use magic to communicate with one another but transport their mercenaries from place to place by more conventional methods. In this case, the Legion's headquarters is located in a distant jungle region that rests somewhere in your campaign world. This option works best for a low-magic campaign or one where powerful spellcasters are few and far between.

It is also important to consider how to introduce the Legion into an existing campaign. If your players already created characters and have adventured in your world before, you need to integrate the Legion in a manner that makes sense to the players and does not cause massive disruptions in your world. The Legion's appearance could be an event or adventure in itself.

The Legion's appearance could be an event or adventure in itself.

When introducing themselves to a new world or region, the Paymasters appear with a few guards drawn from species who enjoy at least a moderate level of acceptance in society. They focus on such mercenaries at first, saving the more exotic creatures for clandestine jobs or very powerful, wealthy clients. Even the human or dwarf members of the Legion wear its tattoos, thus helping pave the way for more exotic warriors as the tattoos and their meaning become familiar. In this way, the Legion slowly acclimates a nation to its presence. The Paymasters are a patient lot. They are content to wait decades before deploying their most exotic and expensive hirelings. Developing the Legion in this manner works best when building it into a brand new campaign or integrating it into a campaign that does not yet have a detailed history.

On the other hand, you might wish to have the Legion appear in your campaign world with a bang. In this case, a desperate noble or kingdom hires the Legion's troops to fend off an invasion or implement a daring attack on a neighbor. The Legion's sudden appearance and strangely restrained monstrous troops win it fame and notoriety across the world. In this scenario, the Legion establishes a highly personalized relationship with a client first, and then uses its success to win acceptance and more contracts across the world. This option works best when adding the Legion to a campaign that has seen frequent play or if a player wants to introduce an exotic character to an established game.

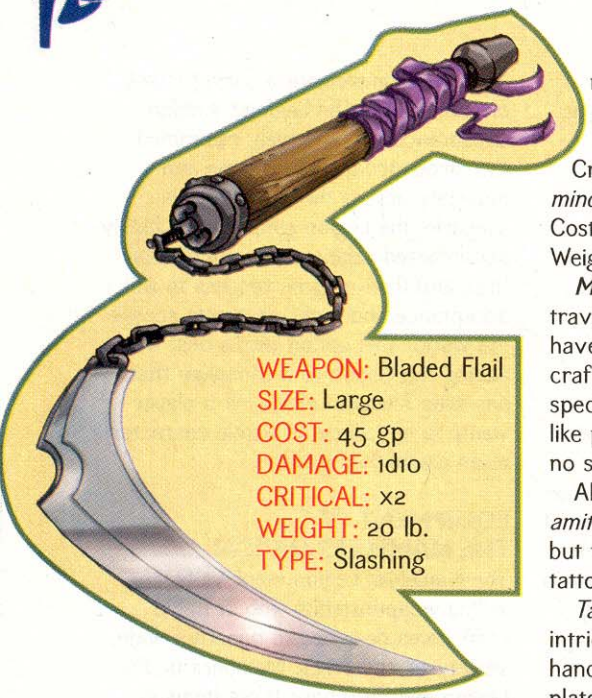
EQUIPMENT OF THE NAMELESS LEGION

The Nameless Legion employs highly skilled weaponsmiths who are able craft items designed to benefit a wide variety of creatures. Members of the Legion may purchase these items at their given price, but non-Legion characters might have a difficult time finding these items anywhere but on the black market.

Wonderous Items

The Paymasters have spent countless years developing new magic items to help them further their goals and aid their legionnaires. These items are difficult to find without access to a high-ranking member of the Legion.

Mask of the Paymasters: The Paymasters rely on these powerful items to conceal their identities and prevent any magical attempts to control their wills. *Masks of the Paymasters* are made of wood and shaped to resemble the face of a wild animal such as a hawk, bear, fish, or leopard. Each mask has its own distinct voice based on the animal that the mask is carved to resemble. For example, a bear *mask of the Paymasters* might have a deep, growling voice, while a hawk *mask of the Paymasters* might have an airy, high-pitched voice. When worn, the wearer speaks with the mask's voice. In addition, the mask grants the wearer immunity to all mind-reading and mind-affecting spells and effects as per the *mind blank* spell. Finally, as long as the wearer of the



WEAPON: Bladed Flail
SIZE: Large
COST: 45 gp
DAMAGE: 1d10
CRITICAL: x2
WEIGHT: 20 lb.
TYPE: Slashing

WEAPON: Broad-Bladed Shortspear
SIZE: Large
COST: 25 gp
DAMAGE: 1d10
CRITICAL: x3
RANGE: 20 ft.
WEIGHT: 7 lb.
TYPE: Piercing

WEAPON: Thunder Club Ammunition
SIZE: –
COST: 105 gp
DAMAGE: 2d4
CRITICAL: –
WEIGHT: 7 lb.
TYPE: Piercing

WEAPON: Vulcanian Thunder Club
SIZE: Large
COST: 75 gp
DAMAGE: 1d10
CRITICAL: x2
WEIGHT: 15 lb.
TYPE: Bludgeoning

mask is alive, it cannot be forcibly removed from his body.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *major image, mind blank;* **Market Price:** 240,000 gp; Cost to Create: 120,000 gp + 9,600 XP; Weight: –.

Magical Tattoos: Through their travels to other worlds, the Paymasters have learned an ancient technique for crafting magical tattoos that grant special abilities. These tattoos function like permanent magic items that have no space limitation.

All legionnaires receive a *tattoo of amity* at the time of their conversion, but they must purchase any other tattoos with their own earnings.

Tattoo of Steel: This series of intricate tattoos covers its recipient's hands with an inked pattern of metal plates and spikes. These tattoos strengthen the recipient's bones and skin, granting her a +2 natural armor bonus to AC.

Caster Level: 2nd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *bark skin;* Market Price: 16,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 8,000 + 640 XP; **Weight:** –.

Tattoo of Amity: This tattoo curves back and forth across a legionnaire's face and makes him better able to interact with commoners and others he meets while on assignment, granting him a +2 morale bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

Caster Level: 2nd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *charm person, cause fear;* **Market Price:** 640 gp; **Cost to Create:** 320 gp + 25 XP; **Weight:** –.

Tattoo of Pain: This jagged, circular tattoo resembles a saw blade and is inscribed on its recipient's hand. Five times per day, as a free action, the recipient of a *tattoo of pain* may activate the tattoo by tapping it. When activated, the tattoo glows red and infuses the recipient's next melee attack with a sheath of crackling, crimson energy that gives her a +2 morale bonus to damage for that attack only. The *tattoo of pain* can only be used in conjunction with a melee attack; it has no effect on ranged or missile weapons. The recipient of the tattoo must declare that she wishes to use the tattoo before making her attack. If her attack fails, that charge is wasted.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength;* **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,500 + 120 XP; **Weight:** –.

Weapons

The weapons listed below are exotic weapons. Characters who do not possess the appropriate weapon proficiency use them with a -4 penalty to hit.

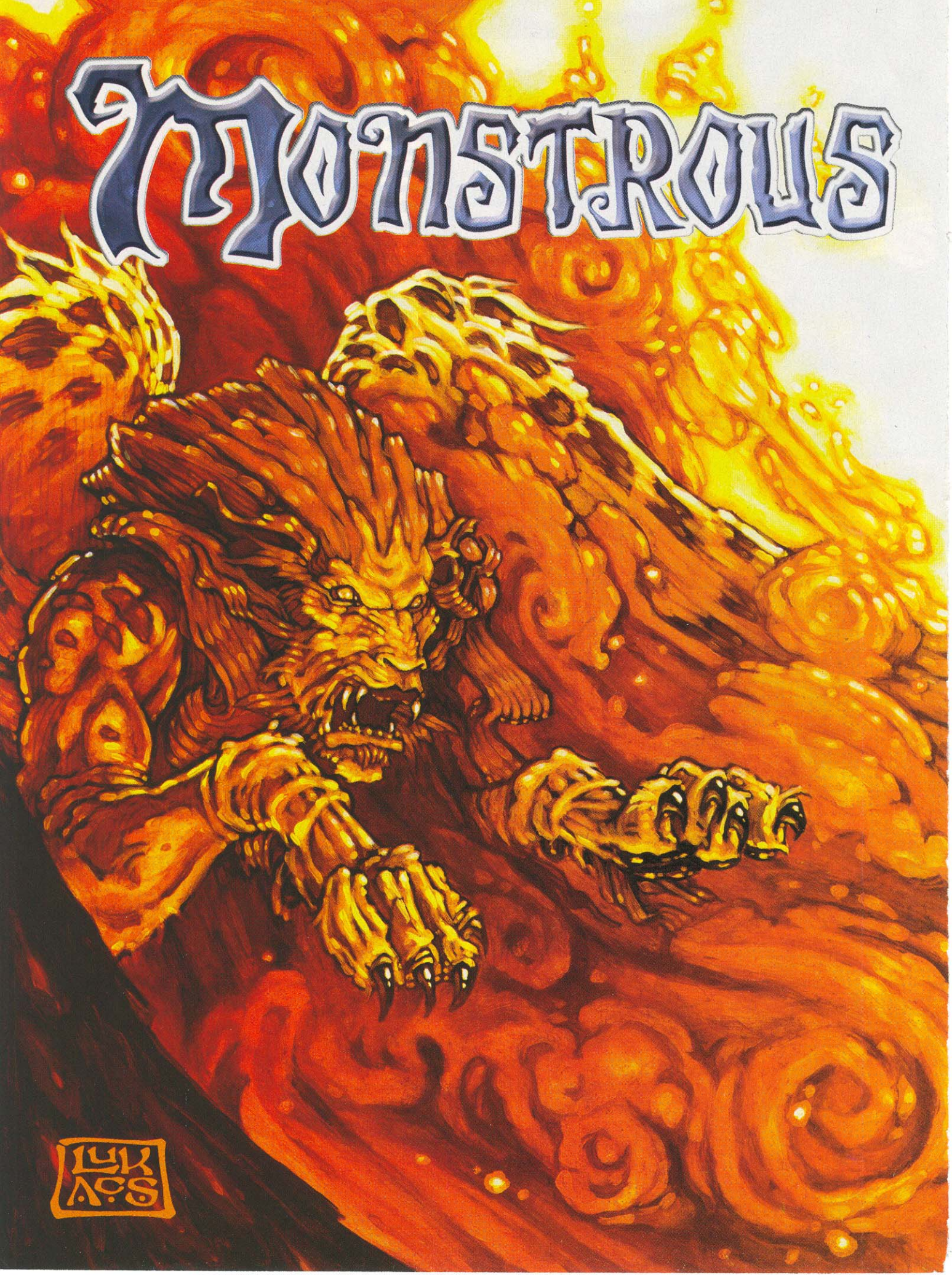
Bladed Flail: A heavy flail set with a sword blade rather than a bludgeon, this weapon is renowned for its ability to chop through hordes of opponents in a deadly arc. When used with the Cleave or Great Cleave feat, the bladed flail grants its wielder a +2 competence bonus to attacks granted by those feats. This weapon also grants the same bonuses to trip and disarm attacks as a standard flail.

Broad-Bladed Shortspear: The heavy steel spear tip of this weapon makes it difficult to use without special training. Like a normal shortspear, this is not a reach weapon.

Vulcanian Thunder Club: This long wooden club is set with sharp, iron spikes. In addition to being used as a great club, the vulcanian thunder club has another use. The club's upper end is set with a hollow metal chamber. Before battle, this chamber is stuffed with an ammunition packet—a mixture of alchemist's fire, other alchemical items, and iron pellets—and covered with a wax-sealed wooden plate. A short string runs down the club from this plate to the weapon's handle. In combat, the wielder may use a standard action to pull the string, breaking the seal, and removing the wooden plate. With the contents of the metal chamber exposed to air, the alchemist's fire within detonates in a small explosion that sends the pellets bursting forth toward the enemy in 20-foot cone that deals 2d4 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 15) halves this damage.

After using the club in this manner, a character can reload the club with an ammunition packet. Instead of purchasing the ammunition packets, a character with the Alchemy skill may also create them with a successful Alchemy check (DC 25).

Monstrous



Magic 46 Spells for Unusual Spellcasters

by James Wyatt · illustrated by Chuck Lukacs

The new edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game opens up vast ranges of new options for player characters of all races and kinds. But what does your minotaur wizard do when he wants to cast *mount?* How does your lich PC heal a number of undead allies at once? How does your *awakened* dire bear make his claws flaming and holy? And just how do you awaken an ooze to make a playable PC, anyway?

The answers are here, in this selection of 46 new spells designed with monstrous casters in mind.

Remember, though: They're not just for PCs!

Several of these spells also have psionic versions presented, particularly those that would be of special interest to mind flayer or yuan-ti psions and psychic warriors. In every case, the psionic power functions the same as the spell, and separate statistics are listed that are relevant for the psionic user.

Bolster Damage Reduction

Abjuration
Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The target creature's damage reduction improves, increasing the amount of damage ignored by 5 points. The type of weapon that overcomes the creature's DR does not change. Thus, if you cast this spell on a grick with DR 15/+1, its damage reduction would become 20/+1. This spell has no effect on a creature that does not already have DR, and it does not improve damage reduction (such as

a barbarian's) that cannot be overcome. Multiple castings of this spell do not stack, nor does it stack with damage reduction from spells.

Material Component: A small rod of iron.

Contagion Ward

Abjuration
Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: Creature infected with disease
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell on a creature infected with a disease during the disease's incubation period, you grant the disease itself a resistance to healing magic (such as *remove disease* or *heal*). A character trying to cure the disease must make a caster level check against a DC of 11 + your caster level. If this check succeeds, the healing spell works normally; otherwise the disease is unaffected by the spell.

Monsters that infect their opponents with disease enjoy using this spell as assurance that their victims might find a cure harder to come by. *Contagion ward* also protects a xill's egg or a red slaad's pellet from being destroyed by *remove disease* and also wards parasites infesting a creature's body in the same manner.

Greater Spell Resistance

Abjuration
Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You add your caster level to the target's existing, extraordinary spell resistance. The spell has no effect if cast on a creature without natural spell resistance. It does not enhance the spell resistance bestowed by the *spell resistance* spell, any magic items, or any supernatural effect.

Arcane Material Component: Hair from a drow.

Greater Mount

Conjuration (Summoning)
Level: Sor/Wiz 3

As *mount,* but you summon a Huge light horse to serve as your mount. The giant horse is suitable for riding by Large characters (such as ogres and minotaurs) and has the following statistics:

Huge Riding Horse: CR 3; Huge animal; HD 6d8+24; hp 51; Init +0; Spd 60 ft.; AC 14 (touch 8, flat-footed 14); Atk +7 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

A light load for a Huge riding horse is up to 918 pounds; a medium load, 919-1836 pounds; a heavy load, 1837-2760 pounds. A Huge light horse can drag 13,800 pounds.

Hasten Recovery

Conjuration (Healing)
Level: Clr 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Up to one creature/level
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

The subjects of this spell recover subdual damage at a much faster rate than normal: 1 point per Hit Die per round, rather than that rate per hour. This spell does not hasten recovery from other types of damage, including hit point damage and ability damage. Its applicability to subdual damage, however, makes it tremendously useful for creatures with regeneration.

Attract Eyes

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 ft.
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

With an abrupt shout, you momentarily compel the target to look at your face. A creature that fails its saving throw looks directly at you and must immediately make a saving throw against your gaze attack, if you have one. Temporary gaze attacks granted by spells, magic items, and the like count for the purposes of this spell.

Gasp

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Brd 0, Sor/Wiz 0
Components: S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject of the spell inhales deeply, as if short of breath. If the subject creature is holding its breath, it must start making Constitution checks to continue holding its breath or drown, as though it had already been holding its breath for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution score (see the information on "The Drowning Rule" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Aquatic spellcasters, including merfolk and sahuagin, enjoy casting this spell on surface-dwellers who try to fight them without the benefit of *water breathing.*

Invasive Telepathy

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

psionic version:
Telepathy (Cha)
Level: Psion 2
Display: Me, Ma
Manifestation Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Points: 7

As you cast *invasive telepathy,* you force your mind into the target's, filling it with alien thoughts and overwhelming its capacity for sanity. If you are undead, an aberration, or an evil outsider, you deal 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage to the target. Otherwise, you deal 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage.

Aura of Power
Evocation
Level: Clr 6
Components: V, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

A shimmering field of divine power surrounds you, granting you the following benefits:

- Your natural armor, if you already have some, toughens to increase your natural armor bonus by +4. If you do not have a natural armor bonus already (including one provided by an *amulet of natural armor* or a *barkskin* spell), this spell does not grant you one.
- Your natural attack forms, if you have any, become heavier and sharper, dealing 2 extra points of damage with each successful attack. This does not improve unarmed strikes, only natural attacks such as claws, bites, and slams.
- The saving throw DCs for your supernatural abilities, if you have any, increase by +2. Spells you cast, spell-like abilities you possess, and extraordinary abilities are unaffected.

Energize Projectiles
Evocation [see text]
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Up to 1 projectile/level
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You transfer elemental energy from your own substance to a projectile, such as an arrow, crossbow bolt, spear, or thrown rock. For the duration of the spell or until used, the projectile deals an additional 2d6 points of energy damage on a successful hit. The energy type depends on your subtype: it is cold, electricity, or fire damage, depending on what subtype you have. If you do not have the cold, fire, or electricity subtype, this spell has no effect.

You do not have to throw or launch the affected projectile, but other creatures are not protected from the energy if they pick up an electrically charged javelin, for example. An unprotected character takes 1d6 points of damage from simply touching a charged projectile, but this does not discharge the spell.

Gullet of Fire
Evocation [Fire]
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Flames burn within your digestive tract, not harming you, but searing any creature or object that you have swallowed. In addition to any bludgeoning and acid damage you normally deal to creatures you have swallowed, you also deal an additional +1d6 points of fire damage per size category you are above Medium-size (+1d6 if you are Large, +2d6 if you are Huge, and so on). The spell has no effect if you are smaller than Large, nor does it enhance any fire damage you already deal to swallowed creatures (such as that of a remorhaz).

As a standard action at any point during the duration of the spell, you can spit out a burst of flaming goo much like alchemist's fire in its composition, and identical in its effects. This ends the spell.

Material Component: A hot chili pepper.

Fiery Aura
Evocation [Fire]
Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 15 ft.
Area: 15-ft. emanation centered on you
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

An aura of blistering heat surrounds you, similar to the aura of a magmin. Anyone within 15 feet of you must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer 1d4 points of fire damage from the intense heat. Creatures must make a saving throw each round they are within the area of the spell. Creatures can take damage from this spell only once per round.

If you have the fire subtype, the range and area of the spell are doubled (range 30 feet, area 30-foot emanation) and the damage per round is 1d6. If you are a magmin, your fiery aura deals double damage for the duration of the spell.

Sonic Wave
Evocation [Sonic]
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: 15-foot-wide wave
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

A *sonic wave* is a wave of sonic energy that erupts from your fingertips and travels in a 15-foot-wide wave in one direction to the extent of the spell's range. The wave deals 1d6 points of sonic damage per caster level (maximum 15d6). Unattended objects also take this damage. As a special property

of this spell, if you are a creature with a natural sonic attack (such as a cloaker, a destrachan, a frost worm, or an yrthak), your effective caster level is your racial Hit Dice plus your actual caster level. This effective caster level determines the range and damage of the *sonic wave.*

Blood Drinker

Necromancy [Evil]
Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 4
Components: S, F/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The target's teeth elongate into fangs, and it gains the ability to suck blood with its bite, as a vampire does. As an attack action, the creature can make a successful grapple check against a pinned target. If successful, it inflicts 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain.

If the target already has a blood drain attack (such as that of a dire weasel, gibbering mouther, rast, or stirge), it deals an additional 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain. Also, if its blood drain attack deals temporary Constitution damage, it instead deals permanent Constitution drain for the duration of the spell.

Arcane Focus: The tooth of a vampire.

Breath of Contagion

Necromancy
Level: Clr 5, Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 ft.
Area: 30-ft. cone
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You exhale a cone of putrid breath that can infect creatures with disease. If you are currently suffering from a disease, creatures within the cone who fail their saving throws are infected with the same disease. If you have a natural attack that causes disease (such as mummy rot or demon fever), subjects are infected with that disease. Alternatively, if you previously cast *contagion* and have not discharged that spell, subjects are infected with the disease you choose, as per *contagion.* (Normally, if you cast another spell when you are holding the charge on a previously-cast spell, the first spell dissipates. The *contagion* spell does dissipate when you cast *breath of contagion,* but its magic is transferred into your noxious breath.) If none of these conditions apply, the spell has no effect. If you are suffering from more than one disease, or if you are infected with one disease and can transmit another, creatures within the cone must attempt one saving throw for each possible disease.

Channel the Void

Necromancy
Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

Opening yourself up to the debilitating power of the Negative Energy Plane, you empower your energy-draining attacks. If you have an attack that bestows negative levels, the number of negative levels bestowed is increased by 1. If you have an attack that drains (not merely damages) ability scores, the number of points drained is increased by one-half the normal amount. If you use a spell to duplicate these effects, the results are the same. For example, a wight who has cast *channel the void* bestows two negative levels with a successful slam attack, a wraith with this spell in effect deals 1d6 x 1.5 points of permanent Constitution drain with a successful incorporeal touch attack, and a wizard who casts *enervation* while using this spell bestows 1d4+1 negative levels.

Arcane Material Component: A piece of flesh taken from an energy-draining undead creature (such as a wight or a vampire).

Disanimate

Necromancy
Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Undead or construct touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will partial
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can sever the connection between an animating force or spirit and the body it animates, destroying the target undead or construct. If the target makes a successful Will saving throw, it instead takes 3d6 points of damage +1 point per caster level.

Graft Flesh

Necromancy
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 3 full rounds
Range: Touch
Target: Undead creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Using flesh from a corpse, you replace one or more severed body members (fingers, toes, hands, feet, arms, legs, tails, heads) or broken bones of the target undead creature. The regeneration takes place during the casting of the spell and is complete when the casting is complete. *Graft flesh* also cures 1d8 points of damage + 1 point per caster level (maximum +20), using negative energy.

Graft flesh has no effect if cast on a living creature.

Focus: A fresh or preserved corpse. The corpse loses the members that must be replaced on the spell's subject, but otherwise remains intact.

Greater Spectral Hand

Necromancy
Level: Sor/Wiz 5

As *spectral hand,* but the hand can deliver any touch range spell of 6th level or lower. In addition, if you have a supernatural effect tied to your touch (such as a lich's paralyzing touch), the hand can deliver that effect as well.

On casting the spell, you lose 3d4 hit points, and the result is the hand's hit point total.

Mass Harm

Necromancy
Level: Clr 7
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Targets: One or more undead creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

As *harm*, except as noted above. *Mass harm* has no effect on living creatures; its only use is to heal multiple undead creatures.

Negative Energy Aura

Necromancy [Evil]
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level (D)

A crackling nimbus of negative energy surrounds you. If you are alive, rather than undead, you take 5 points of negative energy damage each round on your turn, starting the round you cast this spell. If you are undead, you regain 5 hit points per round from the negative energy.

Any creature striking you with its body or a handheld weapon that is not a reach weapon deals normal damage, but at the same time, the attacker takes 1d6 points of negative energy damage +1 point per caster level. If a creature has spell resistance, it applies to this damage.

Material Component: A bone from a creature that was once undead.

Semblance of Life

Necromancy
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

You sacrifice some of your undead qualities in order to protect yourself against some undead vulnerabilities. You gain the following defenses:

- You appear living, rather than undead, to all mundane and magical inspection (including *detect undead*).
- You are no longer vulnerable to turning/rebuking or to spells that specifically target undead (such as *invisibility to undead*).
- You are not harmed by sunlight, nor do you take extra damage from spells such as *searing light* and *sunbeam.*
- If you are a vampire, you are no longer repelled by garlic, mirrors, or holy symbols, and you can cross running water and enter a home without an invitation.
- You are healed by positive energy and cure spells, and wounded by negative energy and inflict spells, though you remain immune to energy drain and ability drain.

You lose the following qualities:

- You are subject to mind-affecting spells and vulnerable to specific spells (such as *charm person*) as though you were a living creature of your former creature type.
- You lose any energy drain, ability drain, or ability damage attack form you possess.
- You lose any damage reduction you possess.
- If you are incorporeal or exist on the Ethereal Plane, you become fully solid and material.

Material Component: A gem worth at least 100 gp, carved into the likeness of a human face. The gem shatters at the end of the spell's duration, and the spell ends prematurely if the gem leaves your person before then.

Share Symbiosis

Necromancy
Level: Drd 5
Components: V, F, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You bestow the same symbiotic relationship upon the target creature that the focus creature has. For example, if the focus creature is a dryad, the target develops a symbiotic relationship to the dryad's tree, sickens and dies if it strays more than 300 yards from the tree, and in all other ways has the same link to the tree that the dryad possesses. Druids use this spell to discourage foresters from destroying the tree homes of dryads and similar creatures.

Focus: A creature, such as a dryad or a bajang (described in *Oriental Adventures*), that has a symbiotic relationship to a natural feature such as a tree. You must be touching the focus creature, and the focus creature must be willing.

Spit Poison

Necromancy
Level: Clr 5, Drd 4
Components: S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 ft.
Effect: Spray of poison, up to 30 ft. long
Duration: Instantaneous (see text)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes

psionic version:
Psychometabolism (Str)
Level: Psion 5, Psychic Warrior 5
Display: Me, Ol
Manifestation Time: 1 action
Range: 30 ft.
Effect: Spray of poison, up to 30 ft. long
Duration: Instantaneous (see text)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes
Power Points: 9

You spit a spray of poison toward one target within range. You must make a ranged touch attack to hit the target. If you are currently poisoned, the target creature is subjected to the same poison. If you have a natural attack that transmits poison, the target is subjected to that poison. Alternatively, if you previously cast *poison* and have not discharged that spell, the target is subjected to the effects of that spell. (Normally, if you cast another spell when you are holding the charge on a previously cast

spell, the first spell dissipates. The *poison* spell does dissipate when you cast *spit poison,* but its magic is transferred into your spittle.) If none of these conditions apply, the spell has no effect. If you are suffering from more than one poison, or you are subject to one poison and also have a poison attack, creatures within the cone must attempt one saving throw for each possible poison.

Toughness of Death

Necromancy
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Undead creature touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The subject gains 2 temporary hit points per Hit Die it possesses and a +2 resistance bonus on Fortitude saves.

Awaken Beast

Transmutation
Level: Drd 7
Target: Beast touched

As *awaken,* but you awaken a beast with an Intelligence score no higher than 3, such as a dinosaur or bulette, rather than an animal or tree. Like an *awakened* animal, the beast gets 3d6 Intelligence, +1d3 Charisma, and +2 HD.

XP Cost: 350 XP.

Awaken Magical Beast

Transmutation
Level: Drd 9
Target: Magical beast touched

As *awaken,* but you awaken a magical beast with an Intelligence score no higher than 3, such as a basilisk or frost worm. Like an *awakened* animal, the magical beast gets 3d6 Intelligence, +1d3 Charisma, and +2 HD.

XP Cost: 500 XP.

Awaken Ooze

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V, S, XP
Casting Time: One hour
Range: Touch
Target: Ooze touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

Similar to the *awaken* spell, *awaken ooze* grants humanlike sentience to an ooze. For the spell to succeed, you must make a Will save (DC 10 + the target's HD). The *awakened* ooze is indifferent toward you, feeling no particular debt of gratitude for its condition. You can command it, however, forcing it to perform a certain task if you win an opposed Charisma check. If you win the check, the ooze obeys your instructions for 1 minute, then reverts to its indifferent attitude.

An *awakened* ooze gains the aberration type but keeps all of the characteristics of the ooze type except immunity to mind-influencing effects. (Since it now has a mind, it is no longer immune to such effects.) It gains new Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores of 3d6. It gains skills and feats according to its new type: skill points equal to 2 x its new Intelligence score +2 per Extra Hit Die, and a number of feats equal to its Intelligence bonus +1 per 4 Extra Hit Dice. (Use the variant skill and feat calculations in *Savage Species* if you are using the other rules in that book.)

An *awakened* ooze can speak one language that you know, plus one additional language that you know per point of Intelligence bonus (if any).

XP Cost: 500 XP.

Call Upon Celestial Heritage

Transmutation
Level: Clr 7, Pal 4, Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S, F/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

You can only cast this spell if you have celestial ancestry—if you are an aasimar, a celestial creature, or a half-celestial. When you cast *call upon celestial heritage,* you magically enhance the celestial blood in your veins to gain the qualities of a full-blooded celestial. You gain the following special qualities:

- Immunity to electricity and petrification attacks
- A +4 sacred bonus on saving throws against poison
- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet and low-light vision
- The ability to speak with any creature that has a language, as though using a *tongues* spell
- Damage reduction 10/+1

Arcane Focus: A silver holy symbol.

Call Upon Draconic Heritage

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 6

As *call upon celestial heritage,* but you can only cast this spell if you are a half-dragon, a draconic creature (see *Dragon* #301), or a sorcerer. You gain the following special qualities:

- Immunity to *sleep* and paralysis effects
- Darkvision with a range of 120 feet and low-light vision
- Spell resistance equal to 10 + your caster level

Focus: A scale from a dragon.

Call Upon Fiendish Heritage

Transmutation
Level: Clr 8, Sor/Wiz 8

As *call upon celestial heritage,* but you can only cast this spell if you have fiendish ancestry—if you are a tiefling, a fiendish creature, or a half-fiend. You gain the following special qualities:

- Acid, cold, and fire resistance 20
- Immunity to poison
- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet
- The ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 60 feet that has a language
- Damage reduction 10/+1

Arcane Focus: A silver unholy symbol.

Empower Venom

Transmutation
Level: Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 6
Components: S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Including these spells in your campaign opens up new options for the character's opponents and allies.

Awaken. The expanded list of awaken spells presented in this article allows you to create intelligent foes of almost any creature type, including strange ideas like an awakened ooze leading a group of powerful mercenaries.

Guilds. The spells presented in this article might be a natural outgrowth of monstrous spellcasters in your campaign gathering together and sharing ideas. Such gatherings might include many monsters that under other circumstances would be unwilling to work together. The spells themselves can be the catalyst you need to create organizations of monstrous spellcasters and other elements of the campaign setting or culture.

Target: Venomous creature touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

psionic version:
Psychometabolism (Str)
Level: Psion 5, Psychic Warrior 5
Display: Me, Ma
Manifestation Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level
Power Points: 9

You imbue the subject creature's venom with greater virulence. The ability damage or drain (both initial and secondary) dealt by the poison is increased by one-half.

This spell has no effect if you cast it on a creature without a natural poison or if the creature's poison does not cause ability damage or drain.

Arcane Material Component: A single dose of poison, of any variety, worth at least 90 gp.

Energize Magic Fang

Transmutation [see text]
Level: Drd 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Living creature touched
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

As *greater magic fang,* but you also suffuse the chosen natural weapon with your choice of energy: acid, cold, electricity, or fire. The natural weapon gains the same enhancement bonus as it would with *greater magic fang* (+1 per 3 caster levels), and deals an additional +1d6 points of the selected energy damage on each hit. The energy does not harm the creature the natural weapon belongs to.

If the creature has the improved grab special quality and uses the natural weapon to grapple, a held foe takes 1d6 points of the selected energy damage each round the creature maintains the hold.

Energize magic fang is an acid, cold, electricity, or fire spell, depending on which energy type you choose.

Extra Ability

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: See text
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous

Choose one of your spell-like abilities that duplicates a spell of 4th level or lower and that you have already used the maximum number of times during this day. You can immediately use that ability one additional time, in the same round that you cast *extra ability.* Casting this spell is a free action, like casting a quickened spell, and it counts toward the normal limit of one quickened spell per round.

Material Component: A pinch of sand.

Far Gaze

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You expose one creature to your gaze attack, even if that creature is out of the normal range of your gaze or averting its eyes from your gaze. The target receives a Will saving throw against the spell and receives a normal saving throw against your gaze attack. This spell does not give you any special ability to affect blind creatures with your gaze.

Full Manifestation

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level

This spell works only if you are ethereal or incorporeal. You and all your equipment become fully material, able to affect creatures and objects on the Material Plane normally and subject to Material-Plane attacks and effects normally. At the end of the spell's duration, you return to your previous state, even if it was the result of a spell such as *ethereal jaunt* (unless that spell's duration has since expired).

Material Component: A piece of glass.

Greater Extra Ability

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 8

As *extra ability,* but you can choose one of your spell-like abilities that duplicates a spell of 7th level or lower.

Gullet of Teeth

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

The lining of your digestive tract sprouts razor-sharp teeth that slice and shred any creature or object that you have swallowed. In addition to any bludgeoning and acid

damage you normally deal to creatures you have swallowed, you also deal piercing damage equal to your normal bite attack damage (with no adjustment for your Strength). For example, if you were a behir under the effect of this spell, you would deal your normal 2d8+8 points of crushing damage and 8 points of acid damage, plus an additional 2d4 points of piercing damage. If you have no bite attack, this spell has no effect.

Material Component: A purple worm's tooth.

Heighten Venom

Transmutation
Level: Drd 6, Sor/Wiz 7, Psion 6, Psychic Warrior 6
Power Points: 11

As *empower venom,* but you increase the saving throw DC of the venom by +2 instead of increasing the damage it deals. The DC increase rises to +3 at 16th level and to +4 at 20th level. This increase stacks with the increase granted by the Virulent Poison feat (described in *Savage Species*).

Master Shape

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 hour/level

For the duration of the spell, you gain the benefit of the Improved Control Shape feat, granting you full control over your lycanthropic shapeshifting abilities. This spell has no effect if you are not an afflicted lycanthrope. (Remember that Improved Control Shape is described in a sidebar in the *Monster Manual* that accompanies the description of the lycanthrope template. The feat is usually available only to natural lycanthropes, giving them complete control over their shapeshifting abilities.)

Maximize Venom

Transmutation
Level: Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 8, Psion 7
Power Points: 13

As *empower venom,* but the poison deals the maximum possible damage, both initial and secondary.

Arcane Material Component: A single dose of a particularly dangerous poison, such as deathblade, worth at least 700 gp.

Planar Pocket

Transmutation
Level: Clr 9, Sor/Wiz 9
Components: V, S, M/DF
Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 0 ft.
Area: 5-ft.-radius emanation, centered on you
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Cast on a plane other than your home plane, this spell creates a small area around yourself that is, to all intents and purposes, your home plane. Within the area of the spell, you are not considered extraplanar and are thus not subject to *banishment, dismissal, holy word,* or similar spells. In addition, any elemental, energy, alignment, and magic traits of your home plane (see *Manual of the Planes*) apply within the spell's area of effect as well. The same traits of the plane you are currently on do not apply within the spell's area.

For example, an avoral guardinal who casts this spell while on the Material Plane would create a *planar pocket* of Elysium. Elysium has the minor positive-dominant trait, so any creature within the area of the spell would gain fast healing 2. Elysium is also strongly good-aligned, which means that nongood characters within the spell's area would suffer a -2 penalty on all Wisdom-, Intelligence-, and Charisma-based checks. If a salamander cast *planar pocket* on the Material Plane, the effects would be worse still. The Elemental Plane of Fire is fire-dominant, so unprotected flammable materials within the spell's area would catch fire, while creatures would take 3d10 points of fire

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

While a few of the spells presented in this article are only useful to monstrous spellcasters, most can be used by any spellcaster with a little imagination.

Polymorph. The polymorph spells (both *polymorph self* and *polymorph other*) provide natural attack forms and other monstrous characteristics. Although in many cases the caster cannot cast spells in the new form, a spellcaster can cast the spells from this article while in his normal form and then *polymorph* into a form that lets the spell's abilities function, providing of course, that the "monstrous" spell is still active. This trick works with many other abilities such as the druid's wildshape or a number of psionic powers that allow you to change your shape or grant natural attacks.

Cohorts. Although monstrous spellcasters are naturally rare as characters, they make wonderful cohorts, and taking the spells from this article gives the cohort's spellcasting abilities a unique and monstrous flavor. Taking a monstrous character as a cohort has the added benefit of allowing you to create and play monsters with relatively high ECLs.

Summon Monstrous Spellcasters. Issue #302's "The Summoner's Circle" presented rules for summoning monsters by CR. One of the variants discussed there involved the repeated summoning of individual creatures, and as long as your DM approves, there's no reason that you couldn't summon a monster with spellcasting levels with some of these spells prepared. Remember, however, that spellcasting ability can often make a monster's utility as a summoned ally greater than other monsters of the same CR. In general, you should bump a spellcasting creature's *summon monster* level up to at least one level higher than its CR would indicate.

Prestige Races. This issue's "Prestige Races" article (see page #46) offers a new game mechanic through which you can change your form permanently, add natural attacks, and gain other abilities that allow an existing spellcaster to take advantage of the spells in this article.

damage each round they remained in the area. Fire spells would be maximized and enlarged within the spell's area (but not outside of it, rendering the enlarged quality practically useless), while water-based spells could only be used if the caster made a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level).

Spells that protect characters from planar traits, such as *avoid planar effects* (detailed in *Manual of the Planes*), also protect against the effects of this spell.

Planar pocket has no effect if you cast it on your home plane.

Arcane Material Component: A handful of earth from your home plane (or whatever passes for earth on that plane).

Poison Claws

Transmutation
Level: Drd 4, Rgr 4
Components: S, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Natural weapon touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

psionic version:
Psychometabolism (Str)
Level: Psion 4, Psychic Warrior 4
Display: Ol, Vi
Manifestation Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Natural weapon touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Power Points: 7

By touching the target natural weapon to the poison-secreting natural attack form of a willing creature, you imbue the natural weapon with the same poison. For example, a yuan-ti abomination spellcaster could touch its fang to the claw of an undead minion and thereafter the undead creature would deal poison with its claw attack. Each successful attack with the natural weapon during the duration of the spell delivers the poison to the creature hit. The characteristics of the poison (save DC, initial and secondary damage) remain unchanged. Only injury poisons can be transferred to a natural weapon by means of this spell.

Focus: The poison of a willing, living creature.

Poison Weapon

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: S, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Weapon touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

psionic version:
Psychometabolism (Str)
Level: Psion 5, Psychic Warrior 5
Display: Ol, Vi
Manifestation Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Weapon touched
Duration: 1 round/level
Power Points: 9

By touching the target weapon to the poison-secreting natural attack form of a willing creature, you imbue the weapon with the same poison. For example, a drider caster could touch its short sword to its mouth and thereafter deliver its poison by way of its sword as well as its bite. Each successful attack with the weapon during the duration of the spell delivers the poison to the creature hit. The characteristics of the poison (save DC, initial and secondary damage) remain unchanged. Only injury and contact poisons can be transferred to a weapon by means of this spell.

Focus: The poison of a willing, living creature.

Sacralize Magic Fang

Transmutation [see text]
Level: Drd 7
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Living creature touched
Duration: 10 minutes/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

As *greater magic fang,* but you also suffuse the chosen natural weapon with divine power, either holy, unholy, lawful, or chaotic. The natural weapon gains the same enhancement bonus as it would with *greater magic fang* (+1 per 3 caster levels), and also deals an additional +2d6 points of the appropriate type of damage against creatures of an opposing alignment (a holy weapon deals extra damage to evil creatures, and so on).

If the creature has the improved grab special quality and uses the natural weapon to grapple, a held foe of an opposing alignment takes 2d6 points of the chosen damage each round the creature maintains the hold.

Sacralize magic fang is a chaotic, evil, good, or lawful spell, depending on which type of damage you choose. You cannot choose an alignment if either you or the target is opposed to that alignment. If you or the target is good, for example, you cannot choose unholy damage.

Strength of the Beast

Transmutation
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

This spell functions only if you are a lycanthrope, and it benefits you only while you are in your humanoid form. You gain certain characteristics of your animal form while remaining in humanoid form. You gain the same damage reduction you have in animal form (normally 15/silver), the scent quality, and the feats you gain in animal form. In addition, you gain half the ability score adjustments of your animal form, rounded down to the nearest multiple of 2. For example, if you are a werebear, you gain Str +8 (half of +16) and Con +4 (half of +8), but no adjustment to your Dexterity (half of +2, rounded down to the nearest multiple of 2, is +0).

If you are called upon to make a Control Shape check while under the effects of this spell, you suffer a -4 penalty on your check.

Focus: A lock of hair from your animal form.

SADDLE UP

Mounted Combat

Rules for Intelligent Characters

by Rich Redman · illustrated by David Wahlstrom

Jozan, Tordek, Mialee, and Lidda were in the foothills, investigating a recent series of assaults on local villages. Terrified survivors could only babble something about goblins. The four adventurers felt sure this would be a simple matter of scaring off the little humanoids. As the sun set, Lidda heard something moving just beyond the ridge. Moments later, their goblin opponents charged over the ridge and down the hill. "Sweet Pelor," Jozan shouted. "They're riding ogres!"

Between awakened animals and characters created using the *Savage Species* book, it's possible that your character's mount is smarter than your character. For that matter, your mount might be another player character! With all the new options for mounts, a number of rules issues arise that you and your DM must consider. This article provides ways to resolve those issues.

NUMBER OF RIDERS

One of the first things you need to consider when putting a character on a mount is whether or not the character could feasibly ride it. There are two limitations that affect whether a character can ride a mount.

The first is the mount's Strength, and thus its encumbrance. The *Player's Handbook* and the *Monster Manual* cover those rules. Note that you'll find rules in the *Monster Manual* for quadrupeds of various sizes being able to carry larger loads. These rules are located under the description of Strength in the Abilities section in the beginning of the book.

The second limitation is the number of creatures that can fit in a space. Outside combat, there's no hard and fast limit. Normally, creatures less than three size categories apart cannot occupy the same spaces in combat (unless grappling, briefly during a bull rush, or if one is unconscious or dead). That's clearly not the case with mounts. When cooperating, a mount and rider may occupy the same space, provided the mount has sufficient Strength to carry the load. If the mount and rider are the same size, for example a human riding a pony, the mount cannot carry more than one rider, but size differences between the mount and rider allow for more riders as shown in the Number of Riders by Size chart on page 44.

For example, a horse can usually carry two human riders but is most likely encumbered. In the example from the beginning of the article, a Large ogre could carry four Small goblin riders, provided the goblins, along with all their equipment and the ogre's equipment, weigh less than 920 pounds (maximum heavy load for a 21 Strength, doubled because ogres are Large).

A DM might want to change the number of feasible riders based on the shape of the monster. For instance, a Huge monstrous centipede is a very long creature and might be able to fit more Medium-size riders than the standard amount. Similarly, a Huge cloud giant, with its vertical body form, might not be able to take more than one Large ogre rider. Such judgments should apply to all creatures of similar body form.

A good rule of thumb might be that all creatures with a humanoid body shape

can have half the normal amount of creatures as riders and that long creatures like centipedes can have twice the normal amount. Of course, such mounts must still be able to carry the weight. This rule prevents some silly situations such as a human fighter riding piggyback on another human.

DMs should also consider limiting riders by the number of squares the mount occupies. For instance, although a Large horse can carry four Small halflings, only two can ride the horse and fight effectively.

WHO'S DRIVING THIS THING?

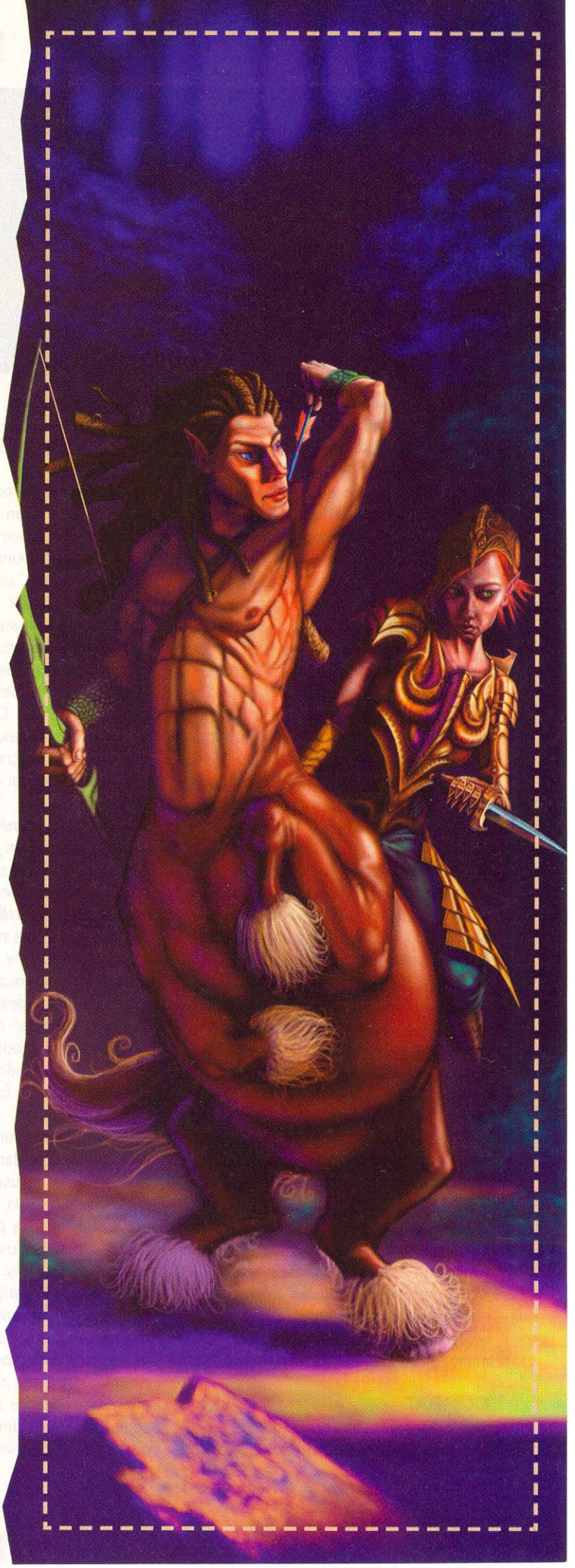
Unless both rider and mount are player characters, the player character should be in charge. Sometimes that will be the rider, as with a dwarf paladin riding his special mount. Sometimes that will be the mount, as with a centaur ranger with a human cohort. You might run into situations where several riders are player characters and their mount is a nonplayer character. In those situations, one of the player characters must take charge and give direction to the mount. DMs might control NPC mounts, but a player shouldn't have direct control over another player's character. They can choose to work together, but neither can force the other.

TRAINING

The rules for training a creature of animal Intelligence to be a mount can be found under the description of the Handle Animal skill. Training a more intelligent mount for riding requires a different set of rules. When mount and riders are all player characters or all nonplayer characters, it is safe to assume they cooperate over the training time (see below). If the potential mount is an NPC and the rider or riders are player characters, then one rider must act as spokesperson for the group and attempt to gain the mount's cooperation. This can be accomplished through Diplomacy checks and roleplaying. Intelligent mounts might also demand services in recompense.

Intelligent creatures require time to train as a mount, but this training does not require that the creature gain ranks in any skill or gain any new feat. Training an intelligent creature to cooperate with riders takes three weeks. Training for combat riding takes an additional six weeks. This training requires no skill roll. Learning to ride an intelligent mount requires the same amount of training, and the rider must have some ranks in the Ride skill. If a creature in an intelligent riding team lacks the proper training, it suffers a -2 penalty to attacks and skill checks involved in moving (such as Balance, Climb, and Move Silently) and acts as though carrying a medium load: It has a maximum Dexterity bonus of +3, an armor check penalty of -6 (in addition to any normal penalty), and a reduction in movement rate (important only if the mount lacks the training). Carrying Capacity in Chapter 9: Adventuring of the *Player's Handbook* shows the reductions to movement speed caused by carrying a medium load.

If a mount is four or more size categories larger than the rider, the mount does not suffer penalties for being untrained. The exception is when the mount is carrying half or more than its maximum amount of riders (adding up their sizes). For example, four Medium-size orcs and eight Small kobolds ride an untrained Colossal tarrasque. In such a case, the mount suffers the penalties outlined above.



NUMBER OF RIDERS BY SIZE

	Rider Size								
Mount Size	Fine	Diminutive	Tiny	Small	Medium-size	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
Diminutive	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tiny	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Small	8	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Medium-size	16	8	4	2	1	0	0	0	0
Large	32	16	8	4	2	1	0	0	0
Huge	64	32	16	8	4	2	1	0	0
Gargantuan	128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1	0
Colossal	256	128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

Note that paladins and their special mounts are automatically considered trained to fight together. DMs might consider requiring that any new intelligent creature riding team must train together, regardless of whether such members received training in another team.

Example: Residents of a halfling town tire of being raided by hill giants. They make a deal with a dragonne, offering it goats and horses in return for carrying a detachment of halflings into battle. Dragonnes are Large quadrupeds with Strength 19. A humanoid with that Strength could carry up to 116 pounds as a light load. A Large quadruped can carry triple that—348 pounds. If the halflings wish to load it up further, the dragonne can carry up to 699 pounds and still get off the ground.

Since the dragonne is Large, it can carry up to four Small riders. On average, a male halfling weighs 35 pounds, so four halflings with all their armor and weapons present no challenge for the dragonne, but as this would put two halfings in each of the dragonne's squares and inhibit their fighting ability, only two halflings choose to ride. The townsfolk acquire exotic saddles for the dragonne and its two riders, and the team spends the next nine weeks training together. The riders arm themselves with shortbows, shortswords, and lances. This combination of weapons allows them to pepper the hill giants with arrows from above while the dragonne roars and benefit from their lances when the dragonne dives on the hill giants, and it provides backup light weapons on the off chance a hill giant manages to grapple the dragonne.

COMBAT

The rules for mounted combat presented in Chapter 8: Combat of the *Player's Handbook* cover the basics. Some of these rules are summarized here with any necessary changes for intelligent mounts:

- If the mount moves more than 5 feet, any rider can only make a single melee attack. Essentially, you have to wait until the mount gets to the enemy before attacking, so a rider can't make a full melee attack.
- Creatures ill-suited as mounts (such as most bipedal creatures) inflict a -2 penalty to their riders' Ride checks. The rider avoids this penalty by using an exotic saddle (see Chapter 7: Equipment in the *Player's Handbook*). A DM might rule that certain creatures (such as humanoids) cannot be ridden without an exotic saddle.
- With a successful Ride check (DC 5), a rider can guide the mount with her knees so as to use both hands to attack or defend herself while mounted. If the mount is intelligent, a PC rider can likely give the mount direction by speaking, but there are many situations where such communication would be impossible or undesirable.
- When a rider attacks a creature that is both on foot and smaller than the mount, the rider gets the +1 bonus on melee attacks for being on higher ground.
- When the mount charges, all riders can deal double damage with a lance.
- A rider can use ranged weapons while the mount is taking a double move, but at a -4 penalty on the attack roll. A rider can use ranged weapons while the mount is running (quadruple speed) at a -8 penalty.
- A rider can cast a spell normally if the mount moves up to a normal move (its speed) either before or after the rider casts. If the rider has the mount move both before and after casting a spell, then the rider is considered to be casting the spell while the mount is moving and must make a Concentration check due to the vigorous motion (DC 10 + spell level) or lose the spell. If the mount is running (quadruple speed), the rider can cast a spell when the mount has moved up to twice its speed, but the Concentration check is more difficult due to the violent motion (DC 15 + spell level).
- If a rider's mount falls while he's riding it, the rider must succeed at a Ride check (DC 15) to make a soft fall. If the check fails, the rider takes 1d6 points of damage. DMs might want to assign more falling damage based on the height the rider is off the ground. Use this option only if you are keeping track of what square the rider occupies.
- When a rider cannot reach an opponent but the mount can, the rider can use ranged combat against that opponent. The normal rules for firing into melee apply.
- If a rider is two size categories smaller than the mount, the rider can use the mount for cover. If fighting normally in melee, the rider can claim one-quarter cover. If fighting defensively, the rider can claim half cover. If using the total defense option, the rider can claim three-quarters cover.

Mounts and Grids

Keeping track of what square a rider occupies within the mount's facing can be difficult and confusing. If you can't keep track of a rider's position, assume that any attack that can reach the mount can reach the rider. If the mount's facing is greater than that of its rider or riders, assume that any area effect that overlaps the mount also affects any riders. In the strange event that a rider's facing is greater than that of its mount, assume that any area effect that overlaps the rider also affects its mount. Similarly, a rider can

occupy any square of the creature's facing, allowing a smaller rider to attack foes on any side.

Alternatively, if you'd rather keep track of a rider's position for area effects and attacks, it's only fair that you also keep track of the rider's position when the rider attempts to mete out attacks. Using this system might mean that riders on much larger creatures are effectively limited to the use of ranged weapons.

Initiative

A paladin's mount is as smart as some characters. Giant eagles, giant owls, and pegasi are all highly intelligent. When such creatures are part of the action, there are several options for initiative.

First, when the mount is not a player character, you can either force mount and rider to act on the same initiative or you can ask the player to roll a separate initiative for the mount. The advantage to the first is simultaneity. If the mount can make a melee attack, the rider can too—provided they have roughly equivalent reach. The second more accurately portrays the mount as a separate, intelligent character. Clever players are most likely to simply delay until their mount's initiative or have the mount delay until the rider's initiative.

When the rider and the mount are both player characters, each should roll her own initiative. The players can synchronize their initiatives or not, as they see fit.

When both the rider and the mount are NPCs, roll once for a single initiative. It's easier for you as the DM, and it simulates the coordination between mount and rider.

Attacks of Opportunity

Riding an intelligent mount or carrying intelligent riders does not protect you from attacks of opportunity. However, if a rider and a mount threaten the same area, they have some options for their own attacks of opportunity.

If the team threatens the same area (that is, they're armed with melee weapons and can all reach the same space) and they have attacks of opportunity remaining, they may attack the same target when it provokes an attack of opportunity. This has the option of delivering a lot of damage to a single target in one round.

If the team threatens the same area (that is, they're armed with melee weapons and can all reach the same space) and they have attacks of opportunity remaining, they may choose to divide their attacks among different targets. This option means that, in most cases, it is never safe to approach the team since some member usually has an attack of opportunity waiting.

Provoking an attack of opportunity should be dealt with as though the mount and rider are individual creatures, not a team. For instance, if the mount uses Spring Attack to move out of an enemy's threatened area without provoking an attack of opportunity, the rider does not gain the same benefit. Similarly, if the rider attempts to grapple a foe, the foe cannot use the attack of opportunity to attack the mount.

Special Attacks

See Chapter 8: Combat in the *Player's Handbook* for complete rules on these combat actions.

Aid Another: Riders may choose to aid their mount in combat, and vice versa.

Bull Rush: The mount makes the bull rush action, not the riders. The riders may use the aid another action to assist the bull rush, assuming they readied an action to do so.

Charge: If the mount charges an opponent, all the riders gain the +2 bonus on their attack rolls against that target but do not suffer the -2 penalty to armor class. In addition, riders using lances gain the special benefits of those weapons.

Feint: A rider or mount may make a feint to mislead an opponent in melee combat. If the Bluff check is successful, then the target loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) against only the melee attack from the member of the team that made the Bluff check.

Grapple: If an opponent grapples a mount, all the riders may join the grapple. Alternately, they may use light weapons to make melee attacks against the opponent. Riders of a grappled mount retain their Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class (if any). If an opponent grapples a rider, any other riders and the mount may join the grapple or make melee attacks against the grappler with light weapons. Only the grappled rider loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any). Note that creatures with improved grab pull the creature they grapple into their square rather than moving into the foe's square. In this case, the creature with improved grab who grapples the mount must be able to drag the weight of the mount, its riders, and all their gear, or it must instead move into the mount's square.

Overrun: Only mounts may use the overrun action. Riders may use the aid another action to assist their mount, assuming they delayed or readied an action to do so.

Trip: A successful trip attack against a mount means that the mount and its rider or riders are prone. If a rider's mount falls while she's riding it, she must succeed at a Ride check (DC 15) to make a soft fall. If the check fails, the rider takes 1d6 points of damage.

SUGGESTED VARIANT: MOUNTED COMBAT

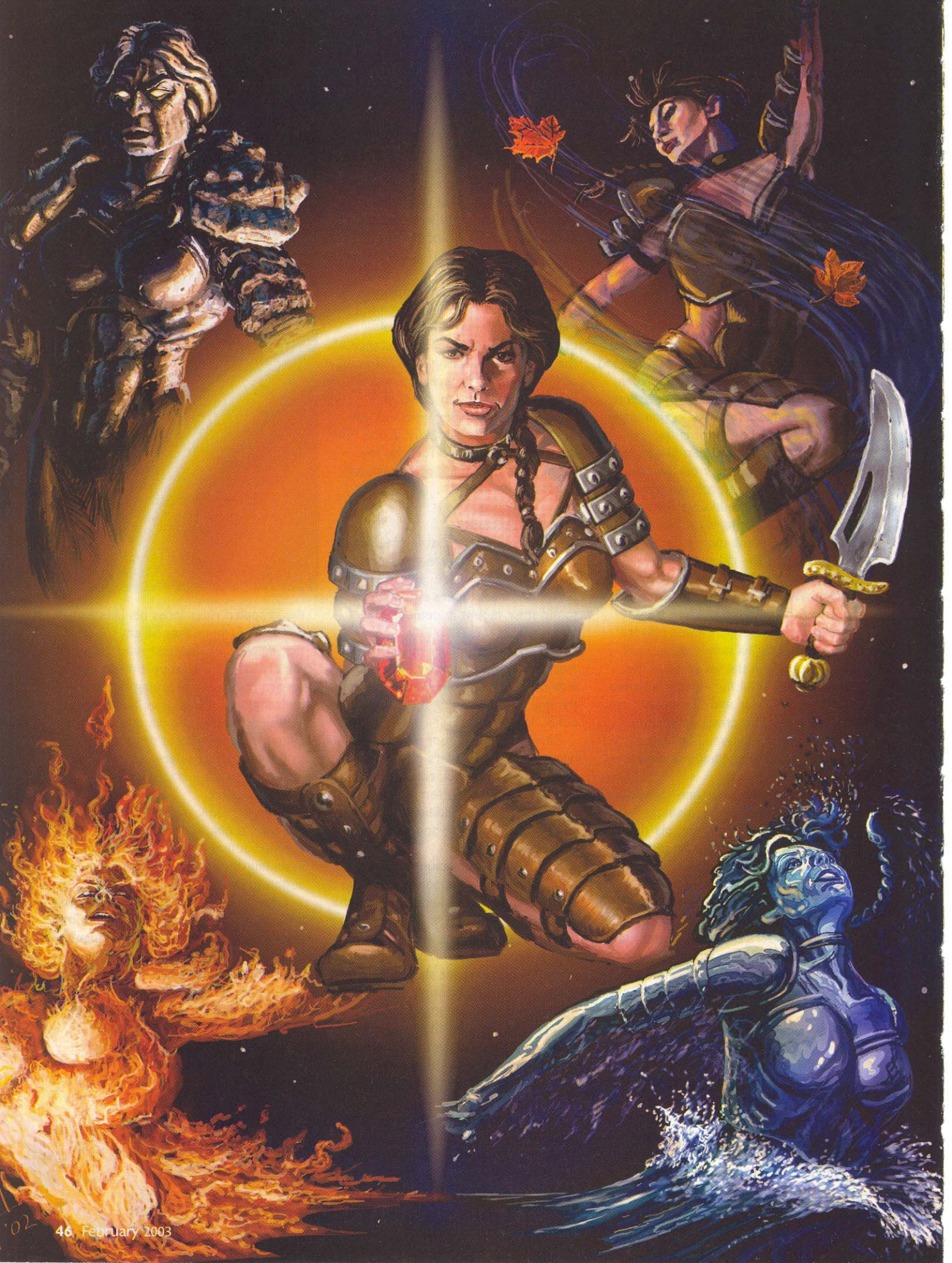
Riding an intelligent mount or playing the mount for another character presents many benefits to PCs and NPCs, especially with feats like Mounted Combat. If it seems that giving PC or NPC mounts the benefit of Mounted Combat might unbalance your game, try this variant:

When the rider and the mount are both intelligent, they benefit from the Mounted Combat feat only when they both have it. A paladin's special mount and animal companions trained for combat riding are exceptions to this rule.

Of course, Mounted Combat requires the Ride skill as a prerequisite. If a mount typically advances by character class (see the *Monster Manual*), it must have or take ranks in Ride in order to take Mounted Combat as a feat. If the mount is intelligent but typically advances by size and Hit Dice, then it may take Mounted Combat as a feat after gaining ranks in Ride, and this usually means that Ride must be taken as a cross-class skill.

Looking over the field of slain ogres and goblins, Jozan said, "It's a lucky thing those halflings flew by on that dragonne, or that would have been a lot tougher!"

Tordek grunted. "I wonder where I could get a mount like that. . . ." D



Prestige RACES

D20 OPEN GAME CONTENT
SEE PAGE 52 FOR DETAILS

Changing Your Character for the Better

by Greg Dent and Brannon Hollingsworth · illustrated by Chris Appel

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules create a world where heroes can experience rapid advances in their skills and power. Surviving adventure and risk-taking are real learning experiences that cause physical and mental change. In this kind of world, creatures might even alter their forms by gaining experience. The *Oathbound* campaign setting, produced by Bastion Press, presented the concept of "prestige races," allowing characters to do just that. By expending XP, any creature can alter its form and gain new abilities.

A prestige race can manifest itself in many thousands of different ways. Any change to the body or mind can be the result of a prestige race alteration, whether it is subtle, such as an increased Intelligence score, or quite obvious, such as the growth of a pair of wings. Most changes are not piecemeal but the result of focusing on a particular prestige race focus. A human cannot simply turn himself into an elemental, but he might slowly progress in that direction over a series of smaller changes. These pathways are known as foci, and are the chief method of categorizing prestige races.

GAINING A PRESTIGE RACE ALTERATION

To gain a prestige race alteration, a creature must first take the Sculpt Self feat. When a creature with the Sculpt Self feat wants to purchase a prestige race alteration, it immediately expends the XP. It must then meditate for the time necessary to channel the XP into altering its form. A creature need not do so immediately, and the process can be delayed as long as the creature wishes. If the creature purchased multiple prestige race alterations, it must meditate for each separately.

SCULPT SELF [GENERAL]
You have the ability to modify the essence of your being.

Benefit: You may spend XP to gain prestige race alterations. You cannot spend the XP for a prestige race alteration if that expenditure would reduce your level.

A creature must meditate for one day per 1,000 XP of the cost of the prestige race alteration, and the creature is presumed to spend about 8 hours meditating each day. You cannot rush the process by meditating more than 8 hours each day. Small interruptions or light activity do not disrupt this process so long as the creature spends about 8 hours a day meditating, but fighting, casting spells, using magic items, or other mentally or physically intensive activities ruin the day's meditation. Unlike a spellcaster creating a magic item, interruptions merely ruin the day's work, not the whole process. Thus, a creature can take as long as it wishes to gain the prestige race alteration.

Once gained, the prestige race alteration cannot be taken away. Loss of levels due to energy drain and other effects never take away a prestige race alteration, and they cannot be dispelled. Most of the effects of a prestige race alteration are considered extraordinary abilities, but any spellcasting ability granted by the prestige race alteration should be considered supernatural.

You cannot take the same prestige race alteration more than once.

STACKING PRESTIGE RACE BENEFITS

The benefits provided by prestige race alterations follow the normal stacking rules for bonus types described in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. For instance, if a creature has a +4 natural armor bonus from a prestige race alteration

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Prestige race alterations can be a great way to create unique characters, but you might want to gain a prestige race alteration for more than the roleplaying opportunities.

Little Money: Your character's party might need to save money for resurrections, or maybe you've already spent your share of the treasure but you still want more. A poor character can always find a way to pay for prestige race alterations.

Not Enough Time: Creating a magic item with the same qualities as a prestige race alteration takes more than twice as much time, and interruptions ruin your work, causing you to lose all the XP and gold devoted to creating the magic item. Prestige race alterations take less time and can be completed at your leisure.

Too Many Items: You might have all your item slots filled with other magic items. Rather than expending a great deal of money on items that have no space limitation, a high-level character can spend a relatively small amount of XP and gain the same qualities.

Easier than Paying: If you can't find a magic item crafter willing to make an item for pay, you can gain the qualities of a magic item without the need for a spellcasting creator.

Can't Be Stolen: Your prestige race alteration cannot be taken away. Even if stripped of all your items, you might still be able to accomplish amazing feats using your prestige race powers.

and an *amulet of natural armor +3*, it gains only the prestige race alteration's natural armor bonus to its AC. If it had an *amulet of natural armor +5*, it would instead gain the benefit from the amulet and not the prestige race alteration.

PRESTIGE RACE FOCI

Prestige race alterations can be grouped into different foci. A prestige race focus represents a particular path of prestige race alterations. This path is much like a feat tree, but characters do not need to take feats to gain prestige race alterations; they need only spend the proper amount of XP and time.

Mineral Focus

Those who focus on the mineral path hold an affinity with the earth and its deepest foundations. The very bones of the world call out to them and hold mysteries that appeal to their innermost selves. Progressing along this path, characters slowly experience changes to their bodies, allowing them to gain powers, abilities, and traits related to the deepest parts of the earth.

Grounded Creature [Mineral]
Grounded creatures have connected with the deep-seated, underlying energies of the earth. As a result, the creature's skin darkens to the color of rich soil and becomes slightly gritty; their legs harden into thick pillars, and their feet begin to resemble wide, flat stones. A grounded creature becomes solidly linked with the ground beneath its feet.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +1 natural armor bonus and a +4 competence bonus to resist trip, bull rush, and overrun attacks.

Special: This prestige race alteration is unavailable to creatures with wind or wave prestige race alterations.

Cost: 928 XP.

Earthen Creature [Mineral]
Earthen creatures have begun to understand how to harness the profuse powers of the earth. Earthen creatures develop a thick skin composed of pebbles, small stones, and a soil-like substance. Their bones gain the density of stone, and their blood thickens to mud. Lastly, their eyes become cold and smooth like well-worn rocks.

Prerequisites: Grounded Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +2 natural armor bonus, and it can cast *soften earth and stone* once per day as a 3rd-level druid.

Cost: 3,264 XP.

Steeled Creature [Mineral]
Steeled creatures hear the whispered secrets of stones and minerals and know how to unravel them. The skin of a steeled creature has hardened into sombrous steel, beneath which pulse muscles of magma. Their eyes smolder and smoke like the core of the earth.

Prerequisites: Earthen Creature, Grounded Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +3 natural armor bonus and a burrow speed of 10 feet.

Cost: 6,400 XP.

Adamantine Creature [Mineral]
Adamantine creatures have mastered the songs of the stones and ground. They have gained the ability to transform their minds into unassailable fortresses of steel and their flesh into an impervious sheet of adamantine. Adamantine creatures are welcomed by the stone as brothers and walk within it unhindered.

Prerequisites: Earthen Creature, Grounded Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +4 natural armor bonus and a +4 resistance bonus to all saves against mind-influencing effects and polymorphing. The creature also gains the ability to cast *meld into stone* once per day as a 7th-level druid.

Cost: 8,280 XP.

Flame Focus

Those who feel the intense heat and rushing draw of fire deep within their souls, and those who are awestruck by its simple mystery and terrible majesty choose to focus on the path of flame. The blazing inferno is a siren's song to their ears. Blazing a trail along this path, they quickly gain abilities and characteristics related to fire and its properties.

Kindled Creature [Flame]
Kindled creatures have felt the stirrings of the flame deep within their souls for as long as they can remember. Within the furnaces of their hearts, a tiny fire has sprung into existence and sears outward, eternally unquenchable. Kindled creatures' dispositions become strained; their tempers shorten as the spark within them grows. Typically, the creature's skin takes on a reddish-orange hue, and their hair and eyes begin to roil with an inner flame.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains low-light vision and fire resistance 5.

Special: This prestige race alteration is unavailable to creatures with wave prestige race alterations.

Cost: 1,600 XP.

Ember Creature [Flame]
Ember creatures have discovered how to fan the flame within them; they have learned how to draw upon its inherent power in order to react with speed and precision. An ember creature's skin becomes opaque, dark, and cracked, with the vague hints of a smoldering fire lying deep beneath its surface. All of the hair on an ember creature's body falls away or vanishes in a puff of acrid smoke, and its eyes darken, leaving only two tiny pinpricks of gleaming light.

Prerequisites: Kindled Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains fire resistance 10 and the ability to cast *produce flame* at will as a 3rd-level sorcerer.

Cost: 7,520 XP.

Fiery Creature [Flame]
Fiery creatures speak with a voice of their inner flame and act through its authority. There is little that evokes fear in them, for they are the masters of their own destinies and giants among mere mortals. Fiery creatures sprout flame and blaze where they once sported hair and whiskers, and their ever-glowing skin ripples with the heat of a hundred torches.

Prerequisites: Ember Creature, Kindled Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +1 inherent bonus to Charisma and the ability to cast *wall of fire* once per day as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Cost: 7,516 XP.

Inferno Creature [Flame]
Inferno creatures are the lords of the flame and cower before none. The roar of fire is their voice, crackling conflagration is their laughter, and the all-consuming blaze is their wroth. An inferno creature's dark skin sizzles and pops with heat and is constantly licked with flickering flame.

Prerequisites: Ember Creature, Fiery Creature, Kindled Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains the ability to cast *fire shield* once per day as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Cost: 4,480 XP.

Wave Focus

Those who elect to follow the way of the wave tend to be placid and slow to anger. They feel the love and pull of the oceans, and from this they draw their unfathomable strengths and patience. As they steadfastly make headway along their chosen focus, these characters slowly experience changes and alterations to their minds, bodies, and spirits that only intensify their longing and love for the sea.

Sodden Creature [Wave]
Sodden creatures realize how truly vast and limitless the powers of the sea can be, and they have managed to bind a portion of that realization to their forms. A sodden creature's skin becomes coated with a slick, transparent film of water that can never be removed or sloughed off. The sodden creature's hair, fur, or plumage turns wet and slimy, remaining so despite all attempts to make it clean or dry. The creature's toes and fingers become webbed and elongated. Further, its eyes become paler and more luminous, like twin full moons reflected upon the surface of a calm bay.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +4 competence bonus to all Escape Artist and Swim checks. In addition, any opponent attempting to grapple the sodden creature or use grapple actions, such as attempting to pin or damage a grappled sodden creature, suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to its grapple checks.

Special: This prestige race alteration is unavailable to creatures with flame or mineral prestige race alterations.

Cost: 384 XP.

Watery Creature [Wave]
Watery creatures have become one with the waves, and their hearts pound with the rhythmic sound of the sea. Their bodies seem to contain rushing rivers held back only by thin skins of vellum. It is said that the color of watery creatures' eyes always reflect their mood, much like the color of the waves might hint at a coming storm.

Prerequisites: Sculpt Self feat, Sodden Creature.

Benefit: A watery creature can breathe water at will like an aquatic creature.

Cost: 4,000 XP.

Saturated Creature [Wave]
Saturated creatures discover how to tap into the immense power that lies beneath the waves in such a way as to actually alter their physical makeup. As a result, the bodies of these creatures undergo a transformation whereby the internal organs become little more than water. While the organs continue to perform their assigned tasks, the potential damage that can be delivered to them by most weapons is essentially nullified. The only outwardly noticeable sign of this change is that the creatures now bleed clear, pure water.

Prerequisites: Sculpt Self feat, Sodden Creature, Watery Creature.

Benefit: The creature is no longer subject to critical hits or sneak attacks.

Cost: 10,000 XP.

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

There are many ways for you to incorporate the idea of prestige races in your game, and you can alter the concept in a number of ways to help you make it easier to import.

It Doesn't Require a Feat: Taking away the feat prerequisite for gaining a prestige race alteration is an easy way to make the idea more appealing to reluctant players.

It Requires Gold: If you multiply the prestige race alteration's XP cost by 5, you can charge that cost as gold a PC must invest to get the properties of the prestige race.

It Requires a Special Component: Once you know how much gold the alteration should cost, you might make such an alteration require a special component of equal value.

It Requires a Special Location: Gaining a prestige race alteration might require that a character meditate at a particular location. This makes such locations a valuable resource to be guarded.

It Requires a Special Object: Perhaps only creatures in possession of a particular magic item can gain prestige race alterations.

It Requires a Special Deed: Gaining a prestige race alteration might be the reward for succeeding in a quest to defeat a particular monster. Instead of gaining treasure or experience, the PCs gain the ability to take a prestige race alteration of a particular price.

Treat Them All like Magic Items: Perhaps when a creature dies, the prestige race alterations it made to itself are expelled in a physical form. These can then be taken by the players and applied to themselves. In this instance, prestige race alterations become a lot like standard magic items.

Wind Focus

The rushing wind awakens something within those who choose to focus on this path. It rouses their potential, driving them onward like a ship with a full sail. As long as they are able to draw breath into their bodies, they feel there is nothing that they cannot do, nothing that cannot be accomplished. The air about them provides inspiration, steels determination, and gives hope. As they speed along their chosen path, these characters become more and more like the quickening wind.

Stirred Creature [Wind]
Stirred creatures hear the clarion call of the wind early in their lives. The mere hint of a gust on their faces and in their hair brings them alive and exhorts them onward toward their goals. Stirred creatures can employ the wind to defend themselves against opponents for brief moments before the capricious wind swiftly flows from them. A stirred creature's hair always seems to be tossed and stirred by a slight breeze, even when no breeze is present. Their voices change, becoming airy and hollow sounding, but they seem to carry farther than normal.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains the ability to cast *wind wall* once per day as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Special: This prestige race alteration is unavailable to creatures with mineral prestige race alterations.

Cost: 4,032 XP.

Zephyr Creature [Wind]
Zephyr creatures have learned to flow with the wind and make its force their own. Zephyr creatures' bodies become more pliable and sinuous, and their skin and hair tones pale considerably as they strive to become one with the air. Further, their eyes turn a soft, airy color, usually light blue, white, or pale yellow.

Prerequisites: Sculpt Self feat, Stirred Creature.

Benefit: The creature gains electricity resistance 5 and the ability to cast *whispering wind* three times per day as a 3rd-level sorcerer.

Cost: 3,391 XP.

Gale Creature [Wind]
Gale creatures channel wind at will, working with it as a potter works clay. However, they can rarely maintain their grip upon it for long. Gale creatures know still that the wind is a fickle and passing thing and that their ability is a privilege given to them by the wind rather than a right to impose upon it. These creatures become impossibly thin, often appearing sickly or even at death's door. Their bones lighten and become supple, allowing them to walk upon the winds.

As they speed along their chosen path, these characters become more and more like the quickening wind.

Prerequisites: Sculpt Self feat, Stirred Creature, Zephyr Creature.

Benefit: The creature gains the ability to cast *wind walk* once per day as an 11th-level cleric.

Cost: 9,504 XP.

Tempest Creature [Wind]
Tempest creatures are one with the wind and the air—it is not only their home but also their closest companion and most trusted friend. Because tempest creatures have unlocked the secrets of the wind and co-exist with it at all times, the wind becomes their protector. Invisible swirls of rushing wind surround these creatures at all times. Further, the smells of wind-borne rain and the sharp tang of lightning always surround tempest creatures.

Prerequisites: Gale Creature, Sculpt Self feat, Stirred Creature, Zephyr Creature.

Benefit: The creature gains the ability to cast *improved invisibility* three times per day as a 7th-level sorcerer.

Cost: 9,071 XP.

Gear Focus

Those that elect to traverse this path hear the call of the future, as spoken by the most potent force other than magic: technology. Gears, pulleys, pistons, and levers are the instruments for a cacophonous symphony of change. Those that dance to this strange new tune progress along the path of the gear and gain characteristics and capabilities related to mechanisms and technology.

Gadget Creature [Gear]
Gadget creatures see the opportunities that technology brings and have taken the first step of meeting it headlong. Turning their hopes, aspirations, and investigations inward, gadget creatures soon find ways to augment their physical and mental abilities. Generally, these augmentations focus on a single area of their bodies and supplement that area with unusual and fascinating arrays of gadgets and mechanisms. Depending on the nature and design of the enhancement, the general appearance of gadget creatures varies dramatically from one creature to another.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: One of the creature's ability scores gains a +1 inherent bonus. Once the ability is chosen, it cannot be changed. In addition, a gadget creature gains a +4 competence bonus to Knowledge (architecture and engineering) skill checks and may use the skill untrained.

Cost: 5,628 XP.

Clockwork Creature [Gear]
Clockwork creatures replace the weaker parts of their physical form, allowing themselves to slowly transform entire parts of their bodies into clockwork substitutes. Typically, limbs or even sections of clockwork creatures' bodies are replaced with mechanical twins, thereby strengthening their frames and increasing their abilities. Depending on the nature and design of their creations, the general appearance of a clockwork creature varies dramatically from one creature to another.

Prerequisites: Gadget Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: Another of the creature's ability scores gains a +1 inherent bonus. This must be a different ability than that chosen for Gadget Creature. Once the ability is chosen, it cannot be changed. In addition, the gadget creature also gains a +2 natural armor bonus.

Cost: 8,700 XP.

Contraption Creature [Gear]
Contraption creatures have gained enough knowledge of technology, clockwork mechanisms, and the rudimentary properties of the physical

world to move their exploits to a new level. Contraption creatures now possess not only the knowledge to augment physical properties and mannerisms of the body, but also of how to drastically boost those properties. Contraption creatures are usually encased within several layers of interlocked and inter-working devices, to the point that they seem more metal than flesh. Depending on the nature and design of their augmentations, the general appearance of a contraption creature varies dramatically from one to another.

Prerequisites: Clockwork Creature, Gadget Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +4 resistance bonus to all Fortitude saves. In addition, the extra damage from critical hits and sneak attacks has a 25% chance to be negated, causing the attack to deal only normal damage. This does not stack or double with the fortification armor quality, but it does provide an additional negation chance should a contraption creature wear such armor.

Cost: 2,531 XP.

Soul Focus

Those creatures that choose the focus of the soul draw the bulk of their power from the enigmatic center of their beings—their souls. Many months and years are often initially spent purifying themselves and then searching for the most central and core aspect of their being. Once they begin along this path, these creatures quickly ascend through its ranks and become both placidly serene and frighteningly formidable.

Blessed Creature [Soul]

Blessed creatures have found the light within their souls and have begun to foster its growth. Slowly, they begin to realize that despite their many years of self-realization and spiritual growth, their eyes are only now truly opening. Blessed creatures can then begin to apply this thought-expanding knowledge to their lives with immediate and stunning results.

Prerequisite: Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +1 inherent bonus to Charisma and a +4 insight bonus to Sense Motive, Spot, and Listen checks.

Cost: 5,884 XP.

Sacred Creature [Soul]

These creatures realize that they have the potential to change the world and set out to do so, relying on their ever-strengthening soul for guidance and support. A sacred creature's skin takes on a warmer tone (often rosy, golden, or silvery). Their eyes melt into twin pools of tranquil light, and their hair becomes fuller, more glossy, and vibrant.

Prerequisites: Blessed Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +1 inherent bonus to Strength and a +4 resistance bonus to all Will saving throws.

Cost: 7,631 XP.

Hallowed Creature [Soul]

Hallowed creatures understand that the path to their ultimate destiny takes them not only through the calm but also through the storm. The countenances of hallowed creatures change, taking on more ethereal and timeless qualities, as if the weights and signs of the years simply vanish. Further, their voices boom with the resonating strength of righteousness.

Prerequisites: Blessed Creature, Sacred Creature, Sculpt Self feat.

Benefit: The creature gains a +1 inherent bonus to Wisdom and can cast *searing light* three times per day as a 5th-level cleric.

Cost: 11,980 XP.

Prestige Races and CR

Giving monsters or NPCs prestige race alterations is not the same as giving them XP and levels of classes. Instead, think of a monster or NPC with a prestige race as you would a monster or NPC with a magic item. If you multiply the XP cost of a prestige race alteration by 5, you get the cost of a magic item with no space limitation and those qualities.

If you subtract this cost from the money you devote to the NPC's gear, you shouldn't have to worry about how it will negatively affect the NPC's CR or the difficulty of the encounter any more than normal when giving an NPC a magic item. If the prestige race alteration is in addition to an NPC's gear or a monster's usable treasure, you have to consider how that affects the encounter as carefully as if you were giving the creature extra magic items. Note that if the creature has plenty of item slots open, you might want to consider halving the gold piece value of the prestige race alterations: A creature with many item slots open would not expend the resources to buy an item with no space limitation.

The possible effects of prestige race abilities are nearly limitless.

Creating Your Own Prestige Race Alterations

The possible effects of prestige race abilities are nearly limitless, but the XP cost can make certain alterations unlikely to be used. This article presents prestige race alterations worth up to 11,980 XP. This approaches the upper limit of what many players will be willing to pay for the benefits, and it limits the prestige race alteration to characters of 12th level or higher. When designing your own prestige race alterations, cheap benefits like skill bonuses are the most likely to be chosen and used by players.

Determining the XP cost of a prestige race alteration is simple in concept, but the math can become complicated. First, determine the cost of each of the granted abilities as though they were all qualities of separate magic items that have no space limitation. You might want to add an ad-hoc price increase due to the fact that the "items" can never be stolen or destroyed, but consider that they can also never be given to another party member who might need them or be sold to buy a better item, and that a feat is required to gain the benefits. Total all those prices. Once you have determined the total price in gold pieces, divide that cost by 5 to learn the XP cost. Note that if the prestige race alterations build upon one another, as in the case of the mineral focus's increasing natural armor benefit, you'll need to subtract the cost of the previous benefit from the cost of the new benefit before adding that to your calculations for the total gold piece cost of the prestige race alteration's qualities. D

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LOCKED AWAY

Chests for Serious Dungeon Residents

by Rick Moscatello · Illustrated by David Wahlstrom

It was a long, hard dungeon crawl, but the adventurers finally reached the treasure chamber and found it stocked with chests. Regrettably, the only companion with any skill with locks had been slain. With grim resolve, the warriors hefted their weapons and set to hacking the chests open, trusting their fortitude to prevail against any traps.

If you're an adventurer, you know what happens next: The traps activate, and a few seconds later, the characters pull the intact treasure from the remnants of the easily destroyed chests. A chest, especially the typical metal-bound wood box common to most dungeons, hardly seems capable of guarding a treasure. The hardness of 5 is hardly a defense—a warrior with meager strength and a basic weapon can expect to deal enough damage to destroy a chest in a few minutes.

While standard chests should still be common, use of the following chests will hopefully change adventurer perception of chests as just another piece of furniture, easily destroyed. Unless otherwise noted, the chests here have dimensions equal to the standard chest.

Dwarven Stone Chest

Dwarves are masters of stonework, and they were the first to develop chests worthy of guarding the most valuable of treasures. Clever adventurers quickly learn to dread dealing with *dwarven stone chests*, which are impervious to all but the mightiest blows. Less clever adventurers could spend their entire career raiding dwarven holds, ignorant that such chests even existed.

Dwarves build things to last, and these special chests are prime examples. These chests are made of 3-inch-thick stone and have a hardness of 8 and 45 hit points. Additionally, when placed on or against stone and locked, the chests fuse with their stone surroundings. A fused chest can be forcibly detached from the stone with a Strength check (DC 30). Simply opening it with the key also releases it. Anyone holding the key to the chest can speak a command word to cause the chest to blend with its surroundings, provided that the chest is on

or against a stone floor or wall and fused to that surface. A blended chest requires a Search check (DC 20) to find. Dwarves within 10 feet of a blended chest can make a Spot check (DC 20) to notice the chest.

The chest is 2 feet long, 1 foot high, and 1 foot deep.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (stoneworking) 5 ranks, *stone shape;* **Market Price:** 4,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,000 gp + 160 XP; **Weight:** 150 lb.

Lifewood Chest

Although these chests are not magical in their own right, they are made with special living wood grown only in elven forests. With a hardness of 5 and 15 hit points, these chests appear much like normal, if finely crafted, wooden chests. Weapons, fire, and other attacks can damage the chest normally, but as its name suggests, it is made of special living wood that heals quickly. As a result, the chest recovers 1 hit point per round. If the chest is destroyed (brought to 0 hit points or lower), it does not recover.

Market Price: 200 gp; **Weight:** 25 lb.

Gnome Puzzlebox

A *gnome puzzlebox* looks like little more than a typical chest and has the same hardness of 5 and 15 hit points. However, this puzzlebox is riddled with magical compartments and extradimensional hidey-holes, and even a completely destroyed chest might hold as much or more treasure in these extradimensional spaces as it did in its main compartment. While it might seem strange to allow the portion of the treasure in the main compartment to be had relatively easily, the extra compartments provide more than enough room to hide the most valued treasures, likening the chest's protection to giving up a pile of silver to protect a priceless gem. That the puzzlebox and its hidden treasure also appeals to the gnome sense of humor, all the better from the inventor's standpoint.

Finding one of the hidden compartments requires a Search check (DC 25). A *gnome puzzlebox* contains five such compartments, each capable of storing up to 1 cubic foot of treasure.

Regardless of the amount of treasure stored in the extradimensional spaces, the chest weighs 20 pounds plus the weight of the treasure stored in the main compartment.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (woodworking) 5 ranks, *rope trick;* **Market Price:** 8,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 4,000 gp + 320 XP; **Weight:** 20 lb.

Green Slime Chest

Deep dungeon delvers tell tales of unusual chests and sometimes bring them to the surface for inspection by sages. One such chest is remarkable in that it is rather fragile; although only a fool would smash it open.

To the horror of any sane adventurer, this chest is composed of green slime, covered with a thin, clear, glass-like substance (made with the Alchemy skill, see clearstone below). It has a hardness of 2 and a mere 5 hit points. However, if destroyed, green slime sprays out in a 10-foot radius. Anyone in this radius must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid the slime, and the contents of the chest are automatically destroyed by the green slime. Those affected by green slime take 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage per round, although it can be scraped off in the first round; in subsequent rounds it must be frozen, burned, or cut away (which deals damage to the victim, of course). Sunlight or *cure disease* destroys green slime. Only stone is immune to damage from green slime. See page 117 of the *Dungeon Master's* Guide for more information on green slime.

As these chests have the distinct bright green color of slime, it requires only a Search check (DC 5) to understand the nature of the chest. Creative adventurers have been known to use green slime chests as expensive but extremely deadly ranged weapons.

Market Price: 1,500 gp; **Weight:** 75 lb.

Acidshard Chest

Although the origin of its design is unknown, the *acidshard chest* is popular among the wealthy lords of the surface. These chests are bound with extra layers of hardened steel, granting them a hardness of 10 and 50 hit points. Reinforcing their toughness, the wood is laced with a caustic alchemical substance. When struck for more than 10 points of damage in a single blow, splinters fly out in a 10-foot radius. Anyone in this radius must make a Reflex save (DC 13) or take 1 point of damage plus 2d4 points of acid damage.

Caster Level: 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (woodworking) 5 ranks, *melf's acid arrow;* **Market Price:** 8,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 4,000 gp + 640 XP; **Weight:** 25 lb.

Magnetic Chest

Crafted almost entirely of iron, a *magnetic chest* can be a particular problem for aggressive heroes. Even rogues dislike these chests, as their properties make it difficult for the lock to be picked.

These chests have a hardness of 10 and 50 hit points, but any iron or steel weapon striking the chest becomes stuck fast, requiring a Strength check (DC 25) to pull the weapon free. Characters attempting to open the lock on a *magnetic chest* suffer a -5 circumstance penalty to their Open Lock check when using iron or steel lockpicks. Note the key and lock mechanism for these chests are usually crafted of nonmagnetic metals.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (metalworking) 5 ranks, *minor creation;* **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 1,500 gp + 120 XP; **Weight:** 50 lb.

Trollflesh Chest

This ugly green, warty chest exudes a noticeable odor from 10 feet away. It has a hardness of 10 and 25 hit points. Fire and acid do normal damage to a trollflesh chest, but all other damage heals instantly, having no effect on the structure of the chest. Disintegration affects the chest normally. The secrets of creating these ugly items are known to only a few, but rumors persist of drow priestesses threatening to convert their troll underlings into chests.

Caster Level: 11th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *major creation;* **Market Price:** 12,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 6,000 gp + 480 XP; **Weight:** 25 lb.

Vanishing Chest

This ordinary chest has a hardness of 5 and 25 hit points, but upon taking 5 or more points of damage, the chest teleports to a different, pre-set location. Unlike many other magic chests, the teleportation enchantment is good for only one use. If desired, the chest's destination can be set to be the same location on the Ethereal Plane. In this case, the point from which the chest vanished remains faintly magical until the chest is retrieved. A successful targeted *dispel magic* spell cast on that

FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Since player characters are more often the ones breaking into stores of wealth rather than the ones trying to protect their wealth, this article might seem like it's the province of the DM only, but let's face it, any DM who's willing to dole out treasure will at some point attempt to take it back. While lugging a magical chest through the dungeon probably won't get you enough security for your wealth to be worth the price, here are some suggestions for using the material in this article to protect your PC's wealth.

Wear it. D&D, especially at high levels, is an economy of magic items, and the best way to protect your wealth is to buy a *+4 mithral breastplate* and wear it.

Get someone else to store it. Now that you know magical chests are out there, shop around for a money lender, inn keeper, or noble who has such secure items and is willing to store cash for your character. Interact frequently with these NPCs and they can become valuable allies.

Build a Stronghold. At high levels, the party will likely have some sort of permanent base of operations, and a secure room with one of the magical chests from this article along with some of the group's own spells and expertise will seem like a small cost if it is successful in protecting the group's collected wealth.

point brings the chest back from the Ethereal Plane.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *vanish;* **Market Price:** 5,250 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,625 gp + 210 XP; **Weight:** 25 lb.

RELATED ITEMS

Although not chests, per se, the following items have similar functions and often contain valuables, making them as likely to be trapped or otherwise protected as chests. In addition, a few of the items modify the protective properties of chests and other containers.

Assassin's Scroll Case

Assassins are diabolically ingenious at plying their trade, and one of their more clever designs, a non-magical scroll-tube that can be used as a weapon, is also one of their most effective. In many communities, possession of this kind of scroll case is generally frowned upon and sometimes punished.

While this scroll case certainly can hold a scroll, a successful Search check (DC 25) reveals 4 tiny holes along the periphery of the cylinder. By twisting the ends of the case and stretching it, the user can expand the case into a blowgun (see below).

Cost: 50 gp; **Weight:** 1 lb.

Blowgun: (The blowgun originally appeared in *Masters of the Wild.* It's reprinted here for convenience.) The blowgun is a long tube through which you blow air to fire needles. A needle does 1 point of damage, and it can deliver an injury or contact poison. A blowgun is a Medium-size ranged exotic weapon.

Cost: 1 gp; **Damage:** 1 (piercing); **Critical:** x2; **Range Increment:** 10 ft.; **Hardness:** 5; **Hit Points:** 3; **Weight:** 2 lb.

Needles: A blowgun fires needles. A bundle of 20 needles costs 1 gp.

Hide Blowgun Use: *Song and Silence* presented simple rules for carrying concealed weapons. The mechanic requires the character attempting to conceal the weapon to make a Pick Pocket skill check opposed by viewers' Spot checks. As a variant, the DM might allow characters to attempt to conceal the use of the blowgun not simply its presence. This use of the Pick Pockets skill is much more difficult than simply hiding the weapon on your person and thus imposes a -10 circumstance penalty on your check.

Buoy Barrel

Tales of pirate chests full of gold abound, but transporting treasure by sea means a real risk of losing it forever to the hazards of the water. This chest, disguised to look like a typical barrel, is more of a means of saving a treasure from the natural risks of the ocean than from the predations of burglars, but its ordinary appearance provides some protection against thieves too careless or too pressed for time to search mundane containers thoroughly.

These barrels have a false bottom (Search DC 25), which can contain up to 1 cubic foot of treasure. In addition to its own weight and the weight of anything stored in the secret compartment, the barrel can keep up to 1000 lbs. afloat.

A *buoy barrel* is often disguised as a storage container for salt, flour, or some other common commodity. Casually inspecting the barrel shows that it even contains a quantity of the substance, although it won't be full. A *buoy barrel* has a hardness of 5 and 20 hit points.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (woodworking) 5 ranks, *water walk;* **Market Price:** 5,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,500 gp + 200 XP; **Weight:** 30 lb.

Double Scroll Case

This non-magical scroll case is popular with couriers, spellcasters, and spys. A double scroll case appears much as a regular case but has an inner lining, behind which an additional scroll (or message) can be hidden. The lining can be found with a successful Search check (DC 20)

Cost: 50 gp; **Weight:** 1 lb.

Coin of Alarm

Although it looks like a normal coin, this magic item is linked to a small golden bell, allowing the owner to monitor the coin's movement from far away. If the coin is moved, the bell rings for 5 rounds, regardless of the distance between the two objects provided they are on the same plane; once activated, the bell will not trigger again for 24 hours. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals the nature of the coin as some form of magic trap.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *alarm;* **Market Price:** 1,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 500 gp + 40 XP; **Weight:** —.

Clearstone

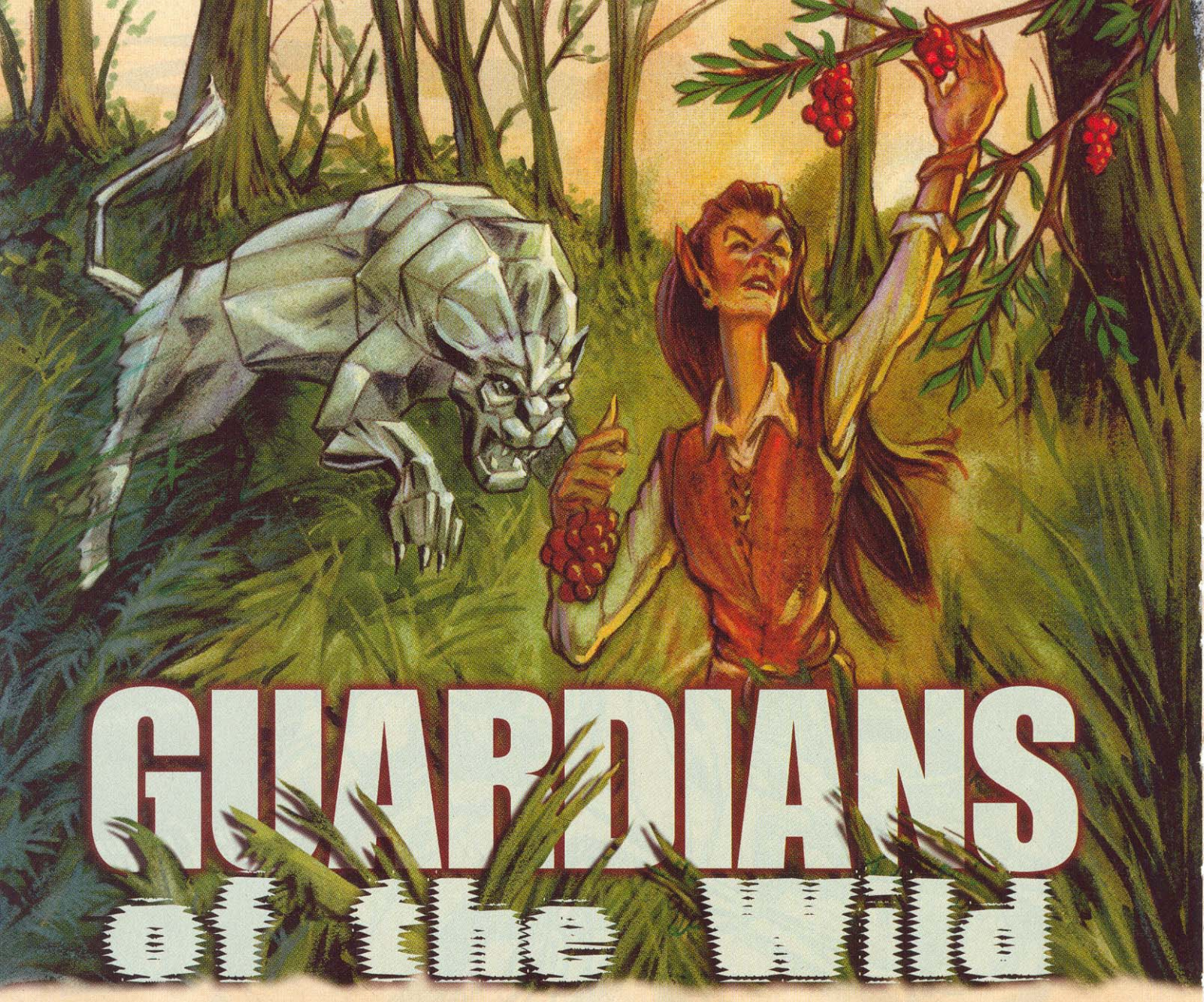
This alchemical substance has all the properties of glass (such as hardness, hit points, and so on), but it reacts to other substances exactly like stone. This means that a chest made of clearstone can hold greenslime, allowing the manufacture of the green slime chest described above. It also means that clearstone flasks cannot store acid.

Cost: 10 gp per pound; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 25.

Oil of Hardness

This alchemical oil, when applied to an inanimate object made of wood, stone, or metal, adds 5 to its hardness. This increase lasts for 1 hour. The oil of hardness has no effect on animated objects or constructs of any kind. One application can cover a Medium-size creature or object or one 10-foot-by-10-foot flat surface such as a wall.

Cost: 50 gp; **Weight:** 1 lb.; **Alchemy DC to Create:** 25; **Weight:** 1 lb. D



GUARDIANS of the Wild

by Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel · illustrated by Tom Gianni

Fey Born Fair and Foul

Creatures of grace and beauty, deadly poison hidden in pretty forms, twisted shapes out of nightmare, fey are all this and more. Fey epitomize life in all its varied shapes, sizes, and materials. They usually inhabit clean, natural places, full of living things such as plants and animals, and good fey have a strong racial hatred of undead, viewing the unliving as abominations. Here are some new fey to add to your campaign, including a PC race, four fey or fey-related creatures, and two templates.

Changeling

A child, born hale and healthy, might suddenly seem weak and sickly a day or two after its birth. In another family with only brown and green eyes, a child grows up to have beautiful violet eyes flecked with gold. Anxious, superstitious parents often view such events with a secret fear: They now harbor a changeling in their home. Sometimes these fears are warranted. Sometimes a human, half-elven, or elven babe is taken by a fey and replaced with a changeling—a child with a touch of fey blood that looks enough like the other race to pass. For example, a seelie court fey might have had a love affair with a lesser fey and the resulting child might look too human to be accepted into the seelie court, a grig might have played a prank, switching several fey and nonfey babies, or the politics of the seelie and unseelie courts might have made a fey fear that its child would be used as a hostage or killed by its rivals.

Changelings represent a viable player character race. As such, they're a way for DMs to introduce diverse fey into the campaign and for players to experience the realm of the faerie. A changeling might seek to find his birth parents, leading to adventures among the fey on the Material Plane or even on the Plane of Faerie. There can be many reasons why a fey would put its child to foster as a changeling.

Physical Description: Changelings are humans born with a touch of fey blood. They look like attractive humans but often have one odd feature such as eyes of two different colors, slightly pointed ears, golden hair, and so on.

Relations: Changelings tend to not fit in and are social outsiders in whatever mortal community they grow up. They're often loners, spending much of their time away from their community. They often find solace in natural environments such as quiet glades, wild moors, or rocky hillsides.

Alignment: Changelings can be of any alignment, though they tend toward neutrality and goodness.

Religion: While changelings often feel a deep spirituality, they don't often conform to the norms and expectations of standard human or elven religions.

Language: A changeling child grows up speaking the languages common to its foster parents, and, if able to frequent natural places, Sylvan.

Names: Changelings bear the names that their foster parents intended for their own child. Often, as the child grows up, a moniker will be added such as a preface of "Odd" or an epithet such as "the Strange" or "the Weird."

Adventurers: Changelings are drawn to careers that allow them to spend most of their time outdoors and in natural settings. They often serve as rangers, guiding folk through dangerous landscapes, or as druids, protecting the land and its creatures. Loners who have no strong connection to their community, changelings are often affected by wanderlust and choose the life of an adventurer.

Changeling Racial Traits

The following abilities are racial traits of changelings.

- -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Charisma: Changelings are physically weak and sickly, but they are agile and persuasive.
- Medium: As Medium-size creatures, changelings have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Changeling base speed is 30 feet.
- Low-Light Vision: Changelings can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- For all special abilities and effects, a changeling is considered both fey and humanoid. Changelings, for example, can use fey weapons and magic items with racially specific fey powers as if they were fey. Likewise, bane against fey weapons deal bonus damage to changelings. Changelings, however, are still considered humanoids and are able to be affected by spells such as *charm person,* yet they receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against *charm person* and other spells and spell-like abilities that specifically target humanoids.
- +2 racial bonus to Disguise checks.
- Many changelings are seen as being inordinately lucky. Indeed, they have limited abilities to alter the odds of success in their favor. Changelings with Intelligence scores of 10 or higher may cast the 0-level spells *guidance, resistance,* and *virtue* each once per day. Treat the changeling as a 1st-level sorcerer for all spell effects dependent on level. See the spell descriptions in the *Player's Handbook.*
- Automatic Languages: Common and either Elven or Sylvan. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Bard. Changelings are natural diplomats and tale-spinners with an affinity for spontaneous magic.

Changeling

Medium-Size Humanoid
Hit Dice: 1d8-1 (3 hp)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 15 (+1 Dex, *+3 studded leather armor, +1 buckler*), touch 11, flat-footed 14
Attacks: Rapier +2 melee; or longbow +2 ranged
Damage: Rapier 1d6-1/18-20; or longbow 1d8-1
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, fey blood
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 13
Skills: Climb +1, Disguise +3, Handle Animal +3, Spot +1
Feats: Weapon Finesse (rapier)

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary or with standard elven or human organizational groups
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Any
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +0

Combat

Most changelings are wary of confrontation, knowing that if their fey blood is discovered in the midst of a superstitious community, they are likely to be shunned, exiled, or attacked. In most cases, changelings attempt to use their natural charisma to talk their way out of confrontations.

Fey Blood (Ex): For all special abilities and effects, a changeling is considered both fey and humanoid. Changelings, for example, can use fey weapons and magic items with racially specific fey powers as if they were fey. Likewise, bane against fey weapons deal bonus damage to changelings. Changelings, however, are still considered humanoids and are able to be affected by spells such as *charm person,* yet they get a +2 racial bonus on saving

throws against *charm person* and other spells and spell-like abilities that specifically target humanoids.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Changelings can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Spells: A changeling can cast *guidance, resistance,* and *virtue* once per day each as a 1st-level sorcerer. (Spell failure penalties for armor apply.)

Skills: Changelings receive a +2 racial bonus to Disguise checks.

Crystalline Cat

Large Fey
Hit Dice: 5d6+10 (27 hp)
Initiative: +3 (Dex)
Speed: 40 ft.
AC: 22 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 19
Attacks: 2 claws +5 melee, bite +0 melee
Damage: Claw 1d6+3, bite 1d6+1
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Implant, improved grab, pounce, rake, wound
Special Qualities: Harmonics, immunities
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16
Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +7*, Listen +5, Move Silently +7*, Spot +8
Feats: Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Focus (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary, pair, or pride (4-10)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: Special
Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral
Advancement: None

A crystalline cat looks as if a master gemcutter crafted a lion out of diamonds. In bright light, it has a breathtakingly beautiful appearance since its body reflects and refracts light.

In reality, the fey's body does have a physical composition akin to fine quality quartz, but it possesses a keen intelligence and sentience far beyond any mere construct. Beautiful, with catlike grace, a crystalline cat chimes softly when it walks.

Combat

Crystalline cats are fierce predators and often attack from ambush.

Harmonics (Su): A crystalline cat can cause its body to resonate in a rich range of tones. These harmonics have two possible effects. They can either act as a countersong per the bard's ability as described in the *Player's Handbook* or a *shatter* spell. Crystalline cats are immune to their own *shatter* ability and the *shatter* ability of other crystalline cats. Creating a countersong tone or a *shatter* tone is a standard action. Caster level 15; save DC 15.

Immunities (Ex): Crystalline cats are immune to poison, petrification, and acid.

Implant (Ex): A crystalline cat that hits with a claw attack can inject a crystal prism into the opponent's body. The affected creature must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) to avoid implantation. Often the crystalline cat uses this ability on an unconscious or otherwise helpless creature (which gets no saving throw). In 24 hours, the host falls extremely ill (-10 to all ability scores, minimum 1). The prism grows rapidly inside the host. When implanted, it is Fine. On the second day, its growth to Diminutive size deals 1d10 points of damage to the host. Each successive day, it increases one size category and deals an additional 1d10 points of damage. It bursts forth from the host when any one of the following conditions is met: It kills the host, it grows to be one size category smaller than the host, or it reaches Large size. If the newly created crystalline cat loses its host before reaching Large size, it continues to grow one size category each day. A crystalline cat is not sufficiently developed to move and attack and is considered helpless until it reaches Large size. Any damage shatters crystalline cats smaller than Large. A *remove disease* spell rids a victim of the prism, as does a successful Heal check (DC 20). If the check fails, the healer can try again, but each attempt (successful or not) deals 1d4 points of damage to the patient.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the crystalline cat must hit with a claw or bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a crystalline cat leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

Rake (Ex): A crystalline cat that gets a hold can make two rake attacks (+5 melee) with its hind legs for 1d6+1 damage each. If the crystalline cat pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

Wound (Ex): The damage a crystalline cat deals doesn't heal naturally. Only a *heal* spell or a healing spell of 6th level or higher can heal it.

Skills: *Crystalline cats chime softly when they walk and thus have a -4 racial penalty to Move Silently checks. Because their crystalline bodies reflect and refract light, they receive a -4 penalty to Hide checks in areas of bright sunlight.

Treasure: Although it carries no treasure, when a fully developed crystalline cat is killed, the quartz crystals forming its body are worth 2d12 x 100 gp. The bodies of undeveloped crystalline cats (those below Large size) don't yield treasure.

Force of Nature

Huge Fey
Hit Dice: 16d6+80 (136 hp)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
Speed: 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (average)
AC: 27 (-12 size, +19 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 27
Attacks: Bite +15 melee, 2 claws +10 melee, 2 wings +9 melee, tail slap +9 melee, crush +9 melee
Damage: Bite 2d8+8, claw 2d6+4, wing 1d8+4, tail slap 2d6+4, crush 2d8+4
Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, spells
Special Qualities: Blindsight, DR 10/+1, dragon and plant traits, low-light vision, SR 15
Saves: Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +13
Abilities: Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 20
Skills: Animal Empathy +15, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +7, Hide -8*, Knowledge (nature) +13, Listen +5, Sense Motive +18, Spot +20, Wilderness Lore +15
Feats: Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover

Climate/Terrain: Any forest
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 14
Treasure: Triple standard
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 17-32 HD (Gargantuan), 33-48 (Colossal)

Part dragon, part plant, and wholly fey, a force of nature looks like a dragon

with barklike scales and leaves for wings. It lives in the woods and is sometimes incorrectly called a forest dragon. A force of nature's interests focus on the nurturing and preservation of its forest. It cares little for fey politics and doesn't often have the patience for the abstract inanities of the fey courts.

Combat

A fierce guardian of natural areas, forces of nature aggressively attack humanoids and other creatures that wander into their habitats. Unless driven by hunger, forces of nature rarely attack animals or fey.

Blindsight (Ex): The creature maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using nonvisual senses (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues). Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though the creature still can't discern ethereal beings. This ability enables the creature to discern objects and creatures within 150 feet. The creature usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability.

Breath Weapon (Su): Every 1d4 rounds, *confusion* as the spell, 50 ft. cone, Will save DC 23 negates.

Dragon and Plant Traits: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing; darkvision 150 ft.; low-light vision (see below); access to dragon feats.

Low-Light Vision: The creature can see four times as well as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, detect chaos, detect good, detect evil, detect law, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, and greater dispelling*. Caster level 16th; save DC 15 + spell level.

Spells: Forest dragons can cast spells as 10th-level druids (save DC 13 + spell level).

Skills: *Forces of nature have a +20 racial bonus to Hide checks in forested areas.

Green Guardian

Huge Plant
Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 19 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 18
Attacks: Slam +8 melee
Damage: Slam 2d6+4
Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Captivating song, greensickness
Special Qualities: Tremorsense
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +5
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 18
Skills: Hide -7*, Listen +12, Spot +13
Feats: Alertness, Iron Will

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary, pair, or garden (3-6)
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: —

A green guardian looks like a clump of very large ferns. It usually blends into other, like-sized vegetation. Fey creatures cultivate green guardians because they're beautiful, appealing plants as well as vigorous protectors. Fey gardens often have a green guardian or two. Nonfey intruders rarely live to regret their trespasses.

Combat

Green guardians defend their property vigorously. They use their captivating song to lull interlopers. As the intruders approach, they attack.

Captivating Song (Su): The leaves of the green guardian rustle gently, issuing a soft susurration. One of the most lovely and deadly abilities of the green guardian is its song. When a green guardian sings, all creatures (other than plants and fey) within a 300-foot spread must succeed at a Will save (DC 19) or become utterly captivated. If the save is successful, that creature cannot be

affected again by that green guardian's song for one day. This is a mind-influencing, sonic effect.

A captivated victim walks toward the green guardian, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flames, off a cliff, and so on), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but suffers no defensive penalties.) A victim within 15 feet of the green guardian stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effects continue for as long as the green guardian sings. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Greensickness (Su): When a green guardian is angry or frightened, it emits a cloud of spores in a 30-foot radius. The spores act as an inhaled poison (DC 18); initial and secondary damage 2d6 Strength.

Tremorsense (Ex): Green guardians can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Plant Traits: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

Feats: Green guardians gain feats as though they were fey.

Skills: Green guardians receive skills as though they were fey. *They have a +20 racial bonus to Hide checks in areas with other vegetation.

Spark

Diminutive Fey (Fire)
Hit Dice: 1d6 (3)
Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.; fly 60 ft. (perfect)
AC: 18 (+4 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 15
Attacks: Slam +0 melee
Damage: Slam 1d2-4 plus 1d3 fire
Face/Reach: 1 ft. by 1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, heat
Special Qualities: Flame flit, SR 10
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities: Str 4, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills: Concentration +4, Hide +19*, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +7*, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Tumble +7
Feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Any land
Organization: Solitary, bonfire (3-6), or blaze (10-15)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

Sparks resemble extremely small humanoids with fiery skin.

Mean and remorseless arsonists, sparks enjoy setting fires and watching things burn. Large fires attract more sparks and heighten the blaze. Unfortunately for the sparks, they're rarely left to such simple pursuits because they're usually under the control of more powerful fey.

A spark's ability to flit from flame to flame and remain hidden within it makes the creature a potentially ideal spy. Their strong desire to set things on fire often overwhelms their fear of their masters. More than one house to which a spark was sent to spy had a lit fireplace suddenly flare up and start the hearthrug on fire.

Combat

Sparks enjoy hurting things and causing pain, but they don't like the prospect of getting hurt themselves. Fragile creatures, one solid hit in melee often kills them. Cowardly by nature, they flee if injured.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*produce flame* and *pyrotechnics*. Caster level 10; DC 11 + spell level.

Heat (Ex): A spark's red-hot body deals 1d3 points of additional fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or when grappling, each round it maintains a hold (or is held).

Flame Flit (Su): A spark can travel between fires as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. In addition to the

range limitations of the spell, the magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some fire. Flame flit is a full-round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Fire Subtype (Ex): Immune to fire damage; takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Skills: *Sparks gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks when in flames larger than a torch.

Seelie Court Fey

The seelie court fey view themselves as the most lovely of the beautiful, the most charming of the desirable, and the most exquisite of all living creatures. Purity and beauty form the basis of their social status. Ordinary fey fall short of the seelie court fey's status but, while not regarded as equals, are at least tolerated. Unseelie fey are considered repulsive and usually driven out of seelie court fey demesnes. Seelie court fey dismiss all other beings as beneath their regard. Occasionally, however, a seelie court fey develops a fondness for a particularly beautiful or talented nonfey, such as a bard with a very high Perform skill or a weaver with a very high Craft skill. The fey cosset these talented mortals like favored pets. While circumstances might occasionally force a seelie court fey to associate with nonfey as equals, they rarely do so willingly or with pleasure.

Fey high-society and the fey realms, be they the Plane of Faerie or fey high-society enclaves on the Material Plane, contain the only creatures whose opinions matter. Politicking thrives in this elitist environment. Seelie fey, having perfected contempt and disdain for other creatures, also form cliques and factionalize among themselves.

Creating a Seelie Court Fey

Seelie court fey is a template that can be added to any fey creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature") if it has exclusively fey ancestry. Creatures who have become fey through any means other than having been born fey from purely fey parents are not welcome in the seelie court. For instance, changelings may not become seelie court fey. A seelie court fey uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Attacks: A seelie court fey retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains vernal touch.

Vernal Touch (Su): To receive a vernal touch is like being kissed by springtime itself, full of life and promise. At will, as a standard action, the seelie fey can touch a creature with a vernal touch. This touch removes dazed, nauseated, fatigued, and exhausted conditions from living creatures. For undead creatures, a seelie court fey's touch attack acts like a cleric's ability to turn undead with a cleric level equal to the seelie court fey's total Hit Dice -2. Unlike a cleric's turn ability, each use of vernal touch affects only the touched undead.

Special Qualities: A seelie court fey retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains the following abilities.

Aura of Glory (Su): A seelie court fey radiates calm. She is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of her gain a morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects equal to the seelie court fey's Charisma bonus.

Iron Vulnerability (Ex): The mere touch of iron (including steel) deals 1 point of damage to the seelie court fey. A hit with an iron or steel weapon deals an additional +1d6 points of damage. Seelie court fey with more than 6 Hit Dice gain damage reduction, which protects them from most of this vulnerability. When a seelie court fey of 6 or more Hit Dice is hit with or touched by an iron weapon, calculate damage including the bonus for iron vulnerability (1 point for a touch or normal damage +1d6 for a successful attack) and then apply the creature's damage reduction.

Sanctuary (Sp): Once per day, a seelie court fey can cast *sanctuary* on herself. Unlike a normal casting of the spell, this ability affects only the seelie court fey. Caster level equal to HD; DC 11 + Charisma bonus.

Damage Reduction: Wood and silver weapons have little effect against seelie court creatures, but iron weapons do (including normal steel weapons). Once seelie court fey reach 6 or greater hit dice, this ability is replaced by normal damage reduction. See the Seelie Court Fey Damage Reduction chart on the next page for details.

Spell Resistance: SR equal to 10 + base creature's CR. If the creature has better spell resistance already, use that value instead.

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FOR YOUR CHARACTER

Although DMs typically get more use from monsters than players, there are several ways that players can make use of the creatures in this article. Some of the creatures are good candidates for summoning, and some can be gained as cohorts through the Leadership feat. Start with the following suggestions, and work with your DM to come up with a way that your character can use the creatures in this article.

The crystalline cat can be summoned with a *summon nature's ally V* spell or taken as a cohort equivalent to a 5th-level character.

A green guardian can be summoned with a *summon nature's ally VI* spell. Druids, rangers, and other nature-oriented characters can use the Leadership feat to take an *awakened* greenvise as a cohort. An *awakened* greenvise counts as a cohort of 11th level.

A spark can be summoned with a *summon nature's ally II* spell.

The unseelie fey unicorn used as an example for the unseelie fey template can be summoned with a *summon nature's ally VII* spell or taken as a cohort that is the equivalent of a 9th-level character.

Spell-Like Abilities: Seelie court fey with an Intelligence or Wisdom score of 8 or higher possess the following spell-like abilities, using their HD as the caster level, as specified in the table below. Each ability is useable once per day.

Skills: A seelie court fey receives a +4 racial bonus to Bluff, Craft or Perform (either one, chosen at the time the template is applied), and Diplomacy checks. Self-absorbed, they also receive a -4 penalty to Listen and Spot checks.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: As base creature
Challenge Rating: As base creature +1
Treasure: As base creature or standard
Alignment: Any
Advancement: As base creature or by character class

Sample Seelie Court Fey

This example uses a basic dryad from the *Monster Manual* who is an 11th-level druid. She is able to cast *liveoak*, thereby giving her the ability to travel easily.

Seelie Court Fey Dryad Druid

Medium-Size Fey
Hit Dice: 2d6 (fey) plus 11d8 (druid) (56 hp)
Initiative: +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 17 (+2 Dex, *+2 glamered studded leather*), touch 12, flat-footed 15
Attacks: *+2 sickle* +11/+6 melee; or *+1 shock sling* +12/+7 ranged
Damage: *+2 sickle* 1d6+2; or *+1 shock sling* 1d4+1 plus +1d6 electricity
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, vernal touch
Special Qualities: Animal companion, aura of glory, DR 20/+2, iron vulnerability, low-light vision, nature sense, resist nature's lure, SR 23, symbiosis, trackless step, venom immunity, wild shape, woodland stride
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +15
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 18
Skills: Animal Empathy +20, Bluff +8, Concentration +11, Craft (origami) +6, Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +7, Hide +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +13, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +16
Feats: Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Mobility, Track

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or grove (4-7)
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: Standard (See Equipment below)
Alignment: Neutral good
Advancement: 3-4 HD (Medium-size) or by character class

Combat

A powerful protector of the forest and lesser fey, the dryad does not hesitate to use her spells and abilities against those who intrude into her forest realm.

Spell-like Abilities: Dryads can communicate with plants at will (as *speak with plants*). They can also, at will, step inside any tree and use *dimension door* as cast by a 7th-level sorcerer to reach their own oak tree. A dryad can use *charm person* three times per day, as cast by a 4th-level sorcerer; targets must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or be charmed for 4 hours.

In addition, this seelie court fey can use the following spell-like abilities 1/day—*charm monster, charm person, command, create food and water, disrupt undead, emotion, enthrall, major creation*, mass suggestion, minor creation*, Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion, prestidigitation, suggestion, unseen servant.* Caster level 13; save DC 14 + spell level.

*Items created by seelie court fey using these spell-like abilities vanish if touched by iron or steel.

Vernal Touch (Su): To receive a vernal touch is like being kissed by springtime itself, full of life and promise. At will, as a standard action, the seelie fey can touch a creature with a vernal touch. This touch removes dazed, nauseated, fatigued, and exhausted conditions from living creatures. For undead creatures, a seelie court fey's touch attack acts like a cleric's ability to turn undead with a cleric level equal to the seelie court fey's total Hit Dice -2. Unlike a cleric's turn ability, each use of

SEELIE COURT FEY DAMAGE REDUCTION

Hit Dice	Damage Reduction	Ability
1	5/iron	*Command, disrupt undead, prestidigitation*
2-3	5/ iron	As above, plus *charm person, unseen servant*
4-5	10/iron	As above, plus *enthrall, create food and water*
6-7	10/+1	As above, plus *suggestion, minor creation**
8-9	15/+1	As above, plus *charm monster, Leomund's secure shelter*
10-11	15/+2	As above, plus *emotion, major creation**
12+	20/+2	As above, plus *mass suggestion, Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*

*Items created by seelie court fey using these spell-like abilities will vanish if touched by iron or steel. Fey cannot create iron or steel items.

vernal touch affects only the touched undead.

Animal Companion: The druid may have one or more animal companions. This animal is one that the druid has befriended with the spell *animal friendship*. The total Hit Dice of all animal companions at a time may not exceed 11 HD because she's an active traveler.

Dire Lion (1): hp 60; *Monster Manual* 57.

Eagles (3): hp 5; *Monster Manual* 196.

Aura of Glory (Su): A seelie court fey radiates calm. She is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of her gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear.

Iron Vulnerability (Ex): The mere touch of iron (including steel) deals 1 point of damage to the seelie court fey. A hit with an iron or steel weapon deals an additional +1d6 points of damage. Seelie court fey with more than 6 Hit Dice gain damage reduction, which protects them from most of this vulnerability. When a seelie court fey of 6 or more Hit Dice is hit with or touched by an iron weapon, calculate damage including the bonus for iron vulnerability (1 point for a touch or normal damage +1d6 for a successful attack) and then apply the creature's damage reduction.

Low-Light Vision: The creature can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Nature Sense: A druid can identify plants and animals (their species and special traits) with perfect accuracy. She can determine whether water is safe to drink or dangerous.

Resist Nature's Lure: A druid gains a +4 bonus to saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey (such as dryads, nymphs, and sprites).

Sanctuary (Su): Once per day, this seelie court fey can cast *sanctuary* on herself only but otherwise as the spell. Caster level 13; DC 15.

Symbiosis (Su): Each dryad is mystically bound to a single, enormous oak tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Any who do become ill and die within 4d6 hours. A dryad's oak does not radiate magic.

Trackless Step: A druid leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Venom Immunity: The druid gains immunity to all organic poisons, including monster poisons, but not mineral poisons or poison gas.

Wild Shape (Sp): The druid can change into a Tiny, Small, Medium-size, or Large animal and back again 4 times per day as per the *polymorph self* spell. Unlike the standard use of the spell, however, the druid may adopt only one form. The druid regains hit points as if she has rested for a day. She does not risk the standard penalty for being disoriented while in her wild shape. She gains all the creature's special abilities when she does so.

Woodland Stride: The druid may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at her normal speed and without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect her.

Druid Spells Prepared: (6/6/5/5/3/2/1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, know direction, read magic;* 1st—*calm animals, cure light wounds, goodberry, magic fang, pass without trace, summon nature's ally I;* 2nd—*charm person or animal, flaming sphere, heat metal, resist elements, tree shape;* 3rd—*cure moderate wounds, plant growth, protection from elements, spike growth, summon nature's ally III;* 4th—*dispel magic, freedom of movement, summon nature's ally IV;* 5th—*commune with nature, death ward;* 6th—*liveoak.*

Equipment: *+2 glamered studded leather armor, +2 sickle, +1 shock sling, bracelet of friends* (keyed to her cohort, Bramble, a seelie court fey crystalline cat, and other seelie court fey allies), *cloak of elvenkind, Quaal's feather token (tree), potions of bull's strength, cat's grace.*

Unseelie Fey

Fey can breed with anything and, except for the pure-blood-minded seelie court fey, often do. The offspring of these liaisons are unusual creatures, blending characteristics of both parents, sometimes able to pass as a parent's creature type. In turn, these half-breeds mate and pass on a blend of features and abilities. After several generations, these mixed creatures often resemble things out of nightmares or a mad

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

While it's relatively easy to incorporate new monsters in a campaign simply by including a habitat for them, the following suggestions might help you use either the crystalline cat or the political machinations of the seelie and unseelie courts as a part of your campaign.

Numerous adventures can have a crystalline cat as a hook.

- The party stops at an inn. A sickly-seeming, wounded person checks in for a week to rest and recuperate. Two days later, the inn staff finds the body with a great gapping wound (where an implanted crystalline cat burst forth). Bloody paw prints lead to the open window.
- Travelers report sighting flashes of light on a nearby hill on sunny days.
- While the party camps overnight, someone on watch may hear the wind-chimelike sound of a crystalline cat. Following the cat or its tracks leads the PCs to a circle of standing stones that act as a gate to the Outer Plane of Fairie.
- A crystalline cat is a cohort of a powerful fey that wants the PCs' help.

Seelie court fey and unseelie fey form two naturally opposed factions. Their conflict can form the basis of many political intrigues, with one or both sides seeking to use the PCs' abilities to further their ends. Even in just the seelie fey court, political machinations run rampant and the player characters might be viewed as tools by manipulative fey.

- If a PC is particularly skilled in the Perform or Craft skill, a seelie court fey might commission a recital or work, introducing the player characters to the politically charged fey world.
- The son of a talented bard worries for his father who disappeared after being seen talking with a remarkably beautiful woman.

VARIANT: MOBILE DRYADS

Dryads are not as geographically moored as they might at first seem. They can easily travel using one of the following methods:

The dryad is a druid or has a druid friend who can cast *liveoak*.

The dryad or a druid has cast *awaken* on her tree.

The dryad travels with a treant that uses its *animate trees* ability to move the dryad's oak.

A DM might choose to have a dryad bound not to a standard oak tree, but to a treant, a force of nature, or some other powerful plant creature.

wizard's experiment.

These oddities generally are spurned by their non-fey ancestor's society. The seelie court fey view these creatures at best as pathetic half-breeds to be spurned with contempt and at worst as despicable perversions of all that is fey, to be hunted down and put out of their misery.

Creating an Unseelie Fey

"Unseelie fey" is a template that can be added to any living creature type (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type becomes "fey." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: d6 or by character class.

Speed: Many fey have wings. Some of them are mere vestiges unable to support the weight of the unseelie fey, but most are useable, enabling the creature to fly at twice the base creature's normal speed (average maneuverability). A base creature that normally has wings might have wings unusual for its kind. Wings can be of any type listed on the table below. Select the wings or roll randomly (see the table below).

% Chance	Type of Wings
01-33	None
34-50	Unusable wings of a type listed below
51-60	Batlike
61-70	Birdlike
71-80	Butterflylike/Mothlike
81-90	Dragonlike/Scaled
91-100	Insectlike

Special Attacks: An unseelie fey retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains one of the season's power described below.

Season's Power: Each unseelie fey has a metaphysical connection to one of the seasons and has the related power.

Vernal Touch (Su): To receive a vernal touch is like being kissed by springtime itself, full of life and promise. At will, as a standard action, the seelie fey can touch a creature with a vernal touch. This touch removes dazed, nauseated, fatigued, and exhausted conditions from living creatures. For undead creatures, a seelie court fey's touch attack acts like a cleric's ability to turn undead with a cleric level equal to the seelie court fey's total Hit Dice -2. Unlike a cleric's turn ability, each use of vernal touch affects only the touched undead.

Summer Caress (Su): Surrounded as if by the warm, verdant air of summer, an unseelie fey with summer's caress is protected by a magic circle of nature. This ability functions much like a *magic circle against evil,* except that it protects against attacks from all creatures of any alignment except for those of the animal, beast, fey, or magical beast creature types. Caster level equal to HD.

Autumn Harvest (Su): Autumn is a time of endings. As a standard action, an unseelie fey can touch a creature with a special dispelling touch. This touch acts like a targeted *dispel magic.* The unseelie fey can use this ability a number of times per day equal to one plus the fey's Charisma bonus (minimum 1). Caster level equal to HD.

Winter Chill (Su): An unseelie fey with winter chill has a presence that disquiets nonfey. The more beautiful the creature is, the more uncomfortable other beings feel. Living, nonfey creatures within 5 feet of her feel uneasy and suffer a morale penalty on saves equal to the unseelie fey's Charisma bonus (minimum 1).

Special Qualities: An unseelie fey retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains fey qualities and those listed below.

Damage Reduction: Wood and silver weapons have little effect against seelie court creatures, but iron weapons do (including normal steel weapons). Once seelie court fey reach 12 or greater hit dice, this ability is replaced by normal damage reduction. See the chart below for details.

Hit Dice	Damage Reduction
1-3	None
4-7	5/iron
8-11	10/iron
12-15	15/+1
16+	20/+2

Iron Vulnerability (Ex): The mere touch of iron (including steel) deals 1 point of damage to the unseelie court fey. A hit with an iron or steel weapon deals an additional +1d6 points of damage. Unseelie court fey with more than 12 Hit Dice gain damage reduction, which protects them from most of this vulnerability. When an unseelie court fey of 12 or more Hit Dice is hit with or touched by an iron weapon, calculate damage including the bonus for iron vulnerability (1 point for a touch or normal damage +1d6 for a successful attack) and then apply the creature's damage reduction.

Vision: Most unseelie fey have low-light vision. Some strange breeding combinations have created odd alternatives (see the table below).

% Chance	Type of Vision
01-70	Low-light
71-80	Standard; the creature can see as well as a human
81-90	Darkvision 60 ft.
91-95	The creature lacks eyes but has tremorsense 30 ft.
96-100	The creature lacks eyes but has blindsight 30 ft.

Abilities: Changes from the base creature as follows: -2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, +2 Charisma.

Skills: An unseelie fey gains a +4 racial bonus to Intimidate checks. It has the skill points of a fey; equal to 2 x Intelligence score and +2 per extra Hit Die. Treat skills from the base creature's list and from the bard's class list as class skills and other skills as cross-class. If the creature has a class, it gains skills for class levels normally.

Feats: Unseelie fey have one feat for every four levels or the base creature's total of feats, whichever is greater.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: As base creature
Challenge Rating: As base creature
Treasure: As base creature or standard
Alignment: Always evil.
Advancement: As base creature or by character class

Sample Unseelie Fey

This example uses a basic unicorn from the *Monster Manual*.

Unseelie Unicorn

Large Fey
Hit Dice: 4d6+16 (30 hp)
Initiative: +4 (Dex)
Speed: 60 ft., fly 120 ft. batlike wings (average)
AC: 19 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15
Attacks: Horn +6 melee, 2 hooves +1 melee
Damage: Horn 1d8+7, hoof 1d4+2
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with horn)
Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, winter's chill
Special Qualities: DR 5/iron, iron vulnerability, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +9
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 22
Skills: Animal Empathy +12, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +10, Listen +13, Move Silently +10, Spot +13, Wilderness Lore +9*
Feats: Alertness
Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or grace (3-6)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always evil
Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large) or by character class

Combat

Unseelie unicorns are hostile and dangerous creatures. They usually attempt to trick or attack those they encounter.

Immunities: Unicorns are immune to all poisons and to charm and hold spells.

Iron Vulnerability (Ex): The mere touch of iron (including steel) deals 1 point of damage to an unseelie fey. A hit with an iron or steel weapon deals an additional +1d6 points of damage.

Low-Light Vision: The creature can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Magic Circle against Evil (Su): This ability continuously duplicates the effects of the spell. The unicorn cannot suppress this ability.

Spell-like Abilities: Unicorns can *detect evil* at will as a free action. Once per day a unicorn can *teleport without error* to move anywhere within its home. It cannot teleport beyond the forest boundaries nor back from outside.

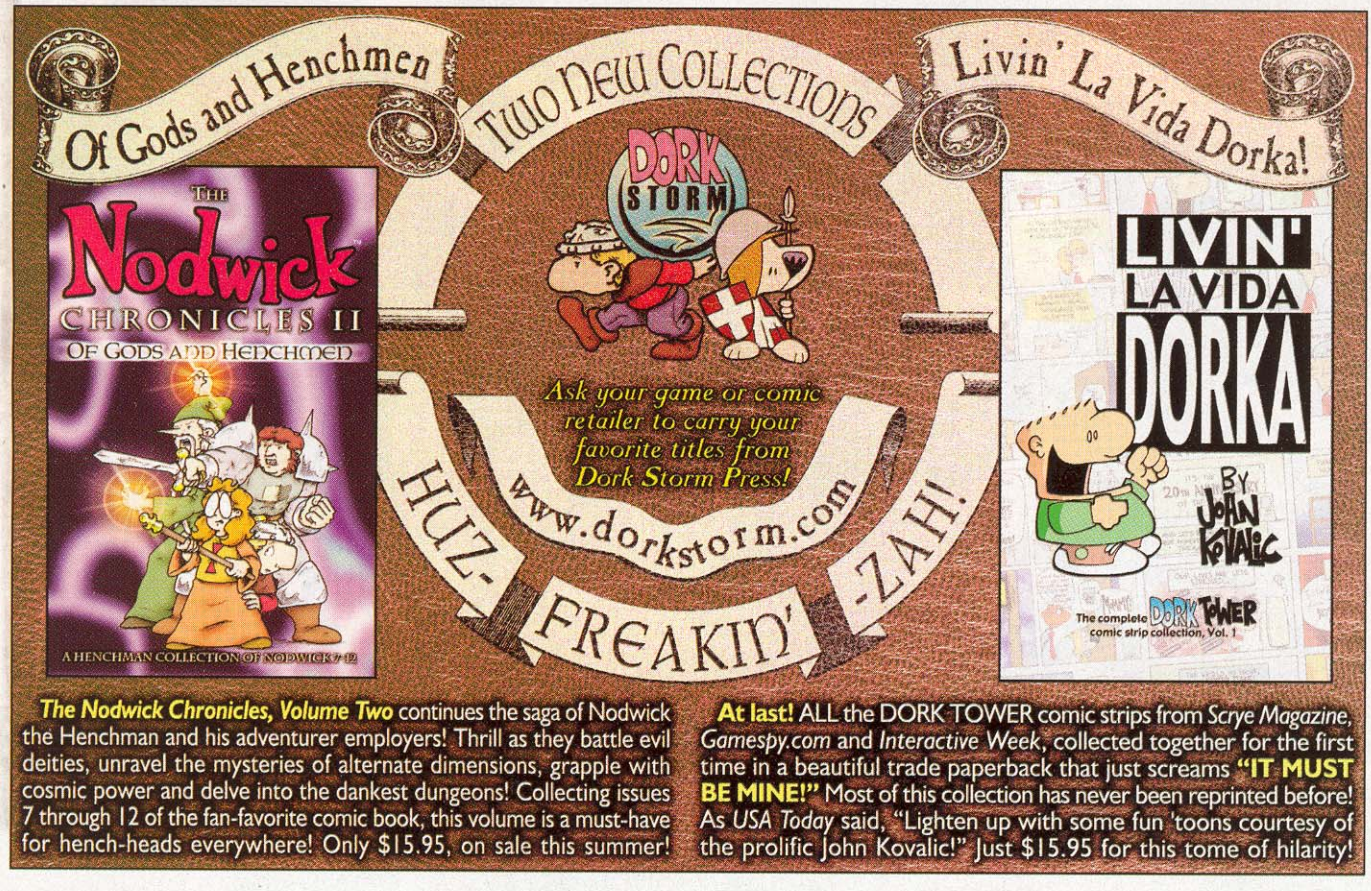
A Unicorn can use *cure light wounds* three times per day and *cure moderate wounds* once per day, as cast by a 5th-level druid, by touching a wounded creature with its horn. Once per day it can use *neutralize poison*, as cast by an 8th-level druid, with a touch of its horn.

Winter's Chill (Su): An unseelie fey with winter chill has a presence that disquiets nonfey. The more beautiful the creature is, the more uncomfortable other beings feel. Living, nonfey creatures within 5 feet of her feel uneasy and suffer a -6 morale penalty on saves.

Skills: *Unicorns receive a +3 competence bonus to Wilderness Lore checks within the boundaries of their forest.

Optional Rule: Fey Variants

Being creatures of extremely mixed genetic ancestry, no two unseelie fey look quite the same. If you have a copy of the *Monster Manual*, you might want to enhance the variations by rolling on the Variant Slaadi table.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HAUNTED

A TALE OF SEMBIA

by Dave Gross · illustrated by Marc Sasso

23 Flamerule 1372:
The Year of Wild Magic

The sewers of Selgaunt were still but for the slow syncopation of dripping water and scratching vermin. From deep alcoves on the walls, green light danced with the shadows in the humid air that gelled above the brown stream. The sewage coursed steadily northeast, toward Selgaunt Bay, except where it eddied and whirled around a heap of refuse. At the base of one such mound, some ancient tremor had left a terrific rent in the stones. Water trickled over its lips to vanish into an abyss that sighed up a warm and fetid mist.

The rats stopped snuffling at the invisible trails they stalked. They flattened their ears at a distant sound, and their bodies trembled as they listened between the water drops.

The sound came again, this time louder. It was a slow, labored grunt, one that might come from a dying man. That sound was common enough on the waterfront and in the stinking channels beneath it, as beggars crawled into alleys and sewer holes for warmth. When such wretches perished in the sewer, the rats enjoyed a rare feast. Yet this time they sensed something beyond sound or scent, a preternatural warning that whatever crawled up from the hole was not coming to attend its own demise. As a flock, the rodents swarmed away from the hole, down the sewer, and toward the salty air of Selgaunt Bay.

A ragged claw emerged from the hole. Once it might have been a human hand, but fragments of bone jutted from the lumps that had been its knuckles, and its necrotic flesh glistened gray and green and black. Its paralyzed fingers slipped across the lip of the pit, unable to grip the slick surface.

Another agonizing grunt, and a second hand emerged.

This one was pale as a cuttlefish, with fingers so long and delicate as to make a musician weep with envy. It clutched a barbed sword of livid crimson iron, which it scraped across the stone until its hooks caught fast. With a final groan, the man behind the mismatched hands pulled himself up into the filth.

His face was a battleground of cool beauty and grotesque deformity. Pale skin still claimed most of his brow, his left eye, and a bit of cheek and jaw. The rest was a tortured mass of burned and abraded flesh. Sharp fragments of bone—too white and smooth to be his own—protruded from his cheek just below his right eye. Weeping pits oozed on his temple, in the hollow of his cheek, and in the patchy ruins that had been his lips.

Infernal gore drenched his clothing, rendering the rich colors into shades of gray. Something had torn away the right sleeve of his velvet jacket and the blouse beneath, leaving a network of black scabs on his arm. Despite the wounds, lean muscles rolled beneath the skin as the man rose up on his hands, then lurched out onto the stinking colligation of dung and refuse.

He rested there on his back, laying the weird sword upon his flat belly as he breathed at first in time with the dripping slime, then more slowly.

"What a triumph!" The cheerful voice resounded only within the man's skull, but he heard it echo as if it had carried all the way down the dank sewer passage. "You have finally found your deserved place in the city, I dare say. Right in the shit."

The man spared no strength to respond to the voice that had been mocking him incessantly for days he could not begin to tally. Instead, he rolled over and pushed himself up.

"Much as it pleases me to see you on your knees, you should have stayed down there," said the voice. "If nothing else, *there* you were the least repulsive of the lot. I'm afraid you'll win every ugly contest in Selgaunt, even those at the Toemalars's. Besides, won't you miss the fracas? That is your self-professed oeuvre, isn't it?"

The man stood, his lean body trembling. He began with a step,

slipped in the muck, and caught himself by using the sword as a cane. Where it struck the water, the blade squealed and spat.

"Well," sighed the voice, "maybe you know best. Find an old bowl somewhere, and perhaps the sailors will drop you a copper for your beer. Those that will come close enough to that stench, that is."

The man's gait grew stronger as he moved northeast, sword in hand. He cracked his neck with a sharp gesture and rolled his shoulders. He thrust the blade forward a few times to stretch his arm and wrist. Accelerating, he followed the passage to a vertical shaft that rose to end in a wide iron grate secured by a heavy, rusting padlock. Moonlight slanted through the bars to form a chessboard pattern over him.

Two strokes of his hellish blade severed the lock from its latch.

"Did you hear that?" called a squeaky voice from the ground above.

"Yeah," replied another man. "Go see what it is."

"Bugger that! You go."

"You're the one who wants to be a city Scepter. Me, I'm just here to scoop up the ashes."

"*Nightcarter*." The man spat the word, for there were few jobs more scorned than that of the men who scraped up dung from the streets of Selgaunt and sold it to the local farmers for pennies.

"And what are you doing with that rake, then? Painting a fresco for the new House Malveen?"

"That's not funny," replied the man. "Did ye ever see one of them things the young one draws?"

"Of course," said his fellow, his tone a broad parody of a nobleman's drawl. "By all means, my old chappy. Why, the missus and I was just admiring one on our latest visit to Mad Andy's gallery."

Two yards beneath the men's feet, the swordsman put his sclerotic hand upon the gate, but he did not yet open it. He stood silently, gripping the hot sword in his left hand, listening.

"Squeaky up there has a point, you know," said the voice inside the swordsman's head. "Little Pietro makes you seem downright respectable by comparison. I wonder how Laskar manages to pay for baby brother's monthly cure disease spell. They don't come free with the trollops, you know. With his appetite, they can't be cheap."

HE FELL HARD ON THE GRAVEL AND SCRABBLED ON THE GROUND FOR AN INSTANT BEFORE RUNNING AWAY, STILL SCREAMING.

The swordsman ignored the voice and pushed open the gate. The susurration of the tide muted the scrape of rusty iron, and he climbed undetected over the disheveled stones to peer over a low wall that marked the disintegrating foundation of House Malveen. Only a few skeletal fireplaces and a trio of columns from the once-grand River Hall remained to identify the place as the great manor it had been. Within the ruin stood two men with their shovels, a tall skinny one leaning on his while a stouter man continued loading a wheelbarrow with charred rubble. Their clothing hung heavy with sweat, as much from the balmy summer night as from their labors. Four lanterns on tall poles cast yellow light on their workspace.

"I'm just saying," said the tall, squeaky one. "It's no wonder there was such queer business here. You know, they used to live in it before it was a warehouse."

"Not lately," said his fellow. "Not for years. Just rats and mice and those poor squatting beggars and their dogs whose bones we dug up last month. No one ever claimed a one of them, I hear. Still, these days, I'd rather be some beggar dossing down in a warehouse corner than a nobleman named Malveen. The ones that haven't run off had to move out of their fine digs and into some tallhouse. Poor devils still want to make a go of it, but the Old Chauncel won't so much as spit on their contracts."

"Hear this?" Squeaky plucked at the imaginary strings on his shovel. "This is the sound of my heart crying for them that's got to worry about summer homes and hedge mazes. They can live under the wall, and I'll move into their poor, piteous—What's that?"

The swordsman had moved as silently as a cloud until he stepped onto the blackened gravel. Now he stood in silhouette against the crescent of Selûne and her trailing tears.

Squeaky shrieked, threw his shovel to the ground, and ran into the wheelbarrow. He fell hard on the gravel and scrabbled on the ground for an instant before running away, still screaming.

His partner raised his shovel like a weapon as he stared at the dark shape of the newcomer.

"We don't wants no . . ."

The intruder took a step forward, and the workman fled after his companion.

The swordsman stood alone in the ruin. He could not smell the acrid stench of scorched wood all around him. He could barely taste it in the air. The oppressive warmth of the summer night meant nothing to his deadened senses.

"You'd think they'd seen a ghost," chuckled his invisible companion. In a more accusatory tone, he added, "Or a monster."

The swordsman bristled at the last word, and his jaw dropped and jutted in indignation. "You know nothing about monsters."

10 Marpenoth 1351: Year of the Crown

"My lord," said the butler. "Master Radu Malveen to see you."

Thamalon Uskevren rose from his seat and walked around his library desk. A few years past forty, he looked less like a clerk than a horseman, despite his reputation as a meticulous accountant and a collector of books. A few streaks of silver had formed in the black hair above his ears, but they lent him a more dashing than aged quality. His smile was friendly, if weary, and his grip upon Radu's arm was warm and firm.

Radu returned the grip with manly assurance. At eleven years old, the boy was lean and hard as an oak branch. His black eyes were clear and honest, if not warm.

"Welcome to my home," said Thamalon.

"Thank you, my lord," replied Radu. "Stormweather is a great house, a fitting abode for a noble family."

Thamalon bowed to acknowledge the compliment.

"May I offer congratulations on the birth of your third child? With your permission, my brothers and I will buy a prayer to Waukeen for his health and prosperity."

"Most kind," said Thamalon. "In turn, may I congratulate you on your recent triumph? All of Selgaunt speaks of your victory at the sword trials."

"Master Ferrick deserves all the accolades."

Thamalon clucked. "You defeated three of his best students to win the wreath, and they have been practicing longer than you have been walking."

Radu inclined his head. "My lord."

"If you please, sit. Would you care for a glass of wine? I have just received a shipment of a splendid clarry from Westgate. Or perhaps a sherbet?"

"Thank you, my lord," said Radu. "I am not thirsty."

"To business, then." Thamalon settled once more in his leather-bound chair. The afternoon light fell in warm shafts through the narrow windows, leaving half of his face in shadow. The effect emphasized some barely hidden emotion, something other than mere fatigue.

Radu said, "My mother."

There was no need for further explanation. Both men realized why Radu had come to Stormweather Towers fifteen years after the last Malveen had stepped foot inside an Uskevren home. Two days earlier, the Old Chauncel had prosecuted Velonya Malveen in absentia, and the high probiter found her guilty of piracy. In a city of plutocrats, there was no greater crime. Now, Lady Malveen and her second son, Stannis, were fugitives in the Sea of Fallen Stars, unable to return to their home port without sacrificing their liberty and their lives.

"No one feels more sympathy for your plight than I," said Thamalon. "My own father was brought low for trafficking with smugglers. Once the high probiter has ruled, however, no one can overturn his decree—not even the Hulorn, much less a mere lord."

"I do not seek an appeal," replied Radu. "You could send her aid."

Thamalon's eyebrows arched over his bright green eyes. "And bring down my house as my father did? Young Master Malveen, our current prosperity is tenuous at best. Even a whisper of illicit dealings would be enough to turn Selgaunt against us once more. Just the fact of your visit has already generated a half-dozen schemes to sniff out some imagined misstep. You must have tripped over the gossips who stalked you to my door."

Radu frowned. "You knew before I came why I requested an audience."

Thamalon nodded.

"And you had already decided to deny me."

"As you had apprehended before you embarked upon your visit, Master Radu," he replied, smiling sadly.

"Then why risk sullying your reputation?" The young man's earlier civility had leached away, and a spot of anger finally colored his pale cheeks.

If Thamalon took offense at the boy's tone, he did not show it. "I was fortunate in a way," said Thamalon. "My house fell with little warning, all in the span of a few hours. Before I could be angry with my father for what he had done, he and my brother both perished that I might escape and rebuild."

"I am ready to die to save my family," said Radu.

"Unfortunately—or rather fortunately, I would estimate—you cannot save it by dying," said Thamalon. "Instead, you must bend your courage to patience, to endurance. Just as there are times to buy and times to sell, you and your brothers must prepare yourselves to hold fast during calamity and rebuild your family fortune in the years to come. It is hard work, I caution you, and lonely. Still, from what I have seen of your mettle, sir, I have no doubt you can succeed in the time the gods allot you."

"You speak as if my mother and Stannis were already—" At last, Radu recognized the expression in Thamalon's eyes as pity. "What have you heard, Lord Uskevren?"

"The message came shortly before you arrived," admitted Thamalon. "The fleet overtook the Red Horizon early this morning. Your mother refused the call to surrender, and with her sorcery she burned two privateer galleys to the waterline before they sank her ship."

"Were there . . . survivors?"

"No, son," said Thamalon. "I'm afraid your time of patience begins today."

23 Flamerule 1372:
The Year of Wild Magic

The swordsman stepped lightly along the gunwale of a fishing boat and leaped to a harbor barge. The crew who slept on its salt-stained deck barely stirred as the intruder crossed their vessel and stepped onto a rubbish scow. He clambered nimbly over the heaped refuse and dropped down onto a river punt strewn with lighted tents.

No one called out as the swordsman traversed the boaters' city. Here, among the hundred vessels lashed together in the middle of Selgaunt Bay, there patrolled no city Scepters to protect the property of the landed lords. Between sunset and dawn, in the jigsaw domain of coasters and brigantines and hoys, there were no laws, no owners, and no questions asked.

The swordsman approached a conical red tent near the bow of the low, squared vessel. He threw open the flap, and ruddy light poured over his changed features. A half-helm covered his forehead, and beneath it was a mask of white porcelain that vanished into the shadows of his high-collared cloak.

A broad-shouldered man sat inside the tent, apparently unsurprised by the intrusion. Unruly hair leaped from the sides of his balding head, and a red leather patch covered his right eye. He sat on a pile of carpets beside a long, low chest, and he smiled with blackened teeth as he looked up at the swordsman. "You're a quick one, you are."

"I *told* you she was a witch," sang the mocking voice inside the swordsman's

THE YOUNG MAN'S EARLIER CIVILITY HAD LEACHED AWAY, AND A SPOT OF ANGER FINALLY COLORED HIS PALE CHEEKS.

head. "She's already sent this beggar a warning, and by morning, the whole city will be abuzz with the story of the madman who had a masquerade favor bolted to his face. Might as well drown yourself and save the family the embarrassment. That's what I say."

The swordsman ignored the voice and spoke to the man on the carpets. "I paid the witch for silence."

"You also paid her to come to me, and I don't like unannounced visitors. Besides, what's said on the water stays on the water. You'd know that, if you weren't a stranger to the decks."

"How much for the blade?"

"All of it. All the rest of what she gave you for the hellsword."

"I do not seek an enchanted weapon."

"NOT EVERYONE CAN USE A BLADE TO DO THE WORK HE WANTS. SOME COME TO ME, LOOKING FOR A MAN WHO CAN SELL THE USE OF HIS SKILL.

"No worries, then. What you're paying for is craftsmanship, not magic."

The swordsman turned as if to leave, but he hesitated before leaving the tent. Instead, he looked back at the man. "Show me."

The one-eyed man opened the chest beside him. Inside were three sword-shaped depressions in a red velvet casing. Only one held a weapon, a blade so slender it might have been a rapier had it been a finger's width narrower. Its three-whorled guard was simple but elegant, in the fashion of the swashbucklers of Tethyr from the turn of the century. The grip was reversed, crafted to fit a left hand.

The swordsman lifted the weapon, felt its balance, observed its oily sheen. He drew a fencer's rune in the air. In his grasp, the weapon was a willow wand, a feather, a weightless extension of his will.

"It's a long and storied blade," said the one-eyed man. "The first owner was the ambassador to Calimshan in the years preceding—"

"No enchantments?" interrupted the swordsman. "Not even an everbright?"

"None," assured the seller.

"I'll take it."

"I can see you're a man knows his swords, and how to handle them." The merchant laid a hand upon a scroll case tied to his belt. "Not everyone can use a blade to do the work he wants. Some come to me, looking for a man who can sell the use of his skill."

Something grated deep in the swordsman's throat. "Darken your mouth."

"What do you mean?" interrupted the invisible voice, this ghost that haunted the space inside the swordsman's skull. "This could be right up your alley, man. Of course, it would help if they could get someone to *capture* and *starve* the victims first. . . ."

"Silence!"

"I only thought you might like a bit of work," said the one-eyed man, oblivious to the ghost's remark. "Seeing as you've just spent the last of your coin." He nodded toward the fat purse at the swordsman's belt and proffered a plain leather scabbard to go with the sword.

The swordsman cut the strings at his belt and let the heavy purse fall to the carpet.

"If you should change your mind," said the merchant. He reached for the money, nonplussed by its rude deposit.

With a snap of his cloak, Radu left the tent. Moments later, he was climbing the side of a merchant cog, on his way to the docks.

"Tetchy, tetchy," chided the ghost. "Among the constellation of sins you have accumulated, hypocrisy was not the first I would have guessed. Is there something about the word 'cutthroat' you don't like? Maybe 'butcher' would better suit, hmm? Or—and stop me when I become too prosaic—how about 'murderer'?"

"You know nothing," said the swordsman. He paused at the edge of the ship and added, "Chaney Foxmantle."

"Good guess!" cried the voice. "I was wondering whether I sounded the same as I did in life. Tell me, do I still have that crushed velvet voice the ladies so adored?"

The swordsman did not reply.

"Come, now, humor your haunting. It's the least you can do. After all, you're the one who robbed me of my middle years and dotage, not to mention the better measure of my prime. For that, I have a feeling we'll be together a long, long time. Well, maybe not *so* long, now that I think about it. The infamous Radu Malveen isn't quite so fearsome with his left hand as he was with his right. Is he?"

"Good enough."

"For what?"

Malveen did not answer.

"For what?" persisted Chaney.

"For patience."

12 Uktar 1351: Year of the Crown

Young Radu pried away the last of the boards and let it fall to the ground. It clattered on the cobblestones and set an alley dog to barking.

The noise covered his entrance as he wound his silk jacket around his fist and punched the window. The leaded glass barely cracked. Radu braced his feet and shoulders against the window jamb and struck again. This time he broke through, sending a pair of triangular shards through the iron pane. They hit the carpeted floor inside with a dull thump and clacked against each other.

He reached inside to open the latch and pulled the window open. The wind whistled low at the open window. Radu shut it, and the sound turned to a painful shrill as the breeze sliced itself against the broken pane. He gathered his sword and the torch he had brought and climbed through into what had been his bedchamber—until a month before.

After Velonya Malveen's defeat at sea, the Hulorn had declared her family holdings forfeit to those who suffered losses as a result of Malveen piracy. Thus, House Malveen was practically empty, for all of the best furniture had already been sold at auction, and the proceeds distributed among the noble houses of Selgaunt. As always, the Old Chauncel had first bite, and his family's wealth was even now affording the wealthiest families of Selgaunt their summer feasts and balls. Perhaps the price of his own bed had paid for a dessert on the table of a Soargyl, a Talendar, or even an Uskevren.

Radu spent a moment reflecting upon Sembian justice as he stood in his old room, which had once included a wardrobe the size of his new quarters in the tallhouse his elder brother Laskar had rented. For a minute, Radu watched dust motes drift down the shaft of sunlight he had let into the dark room. Then he lit the torch and walked deeper into the house, through the upper halls, and down into the River Hall.

The great ballroom of the Malveen had once been a favorite social spot, one of the many satellites to the Hulorn's splendid palace during the festival seasons. Named for its long and winding reflecting stream, the River Hall was also home to a trio of lesser fountains. Lingering magic illuminated the water from below, casting rippling shadows up the green pillars, where slow drops of water oozed down over carved scales and tendrils to pool at the troughs at their bases. Once the laughter of the fountains had served as a hedge against eavesdropping on intimate conversations. Now, to Radu's hot and angry ears, the burbling sounded more like mockery.

He walked the length of the stream and rounded its western pool, where the water slowly drained into the drainpipes beneath the house, thence into the sewers of Selgaunt, and finally back into the bay, from whence it had been summoned and purified by the enchantments of the house plumbing.

Along the north wall, Radu found that the gallery door remained locked. He opened it with the key he had stolen from his older brother. Laskar had his nose so deeply buried in the ruins of the family ledger that he would never notice its absence.

Inside was a miniature art gallery. Pillars and statues populated the floor, and along one wall was a rank of glass-faced cabinets filled with scrimshaw, cameos, figurines, tribal masks, fetishes, and dozens of art objects from as many ports of call across the seas of Abeir-Toril. It was a wonder the collecting agents had not broken down the locked door . . . unless they feared the lingering wards of House Malveen's late mistress. Her sorcery struck fear into the city's populace even weeks after her demise.

Radu ignored them all and went to a vast, life-sized painting of a man who resembled his young ancestor except for his long mustaches and watery blue eyes. On a plaque at the frame's crown was inscribed: Vilsek Malveen. Radu found the latch on the side the frame and lifted it. With a quiet puff of air, the secret door opened to reveal a wide staircase spiraling down into the cool stone chambers beneath House Malveen.

He descended between ranks of mounted heads: griffon and manticore, dire wolf and krenshar, wyvern and troll—even a few monstrous beasts for which the folk of Selgaunt had no name. The bestial faces glowed with simulated life, their glassy eyes reflecting the red light of the passing torch.

At last Radu reached bottom, where the granite foundation of House Malveen had been carved away to form a small arena.

He lit each of the four great stone braziers as he walked along the spiked rail between the arena and its four upper tiers of viewing seats. Amber light filled the wide chamber and revealed a sandy pit ringed by three rectangular iron doors mounted on vertical tracks. In the center lay a black pit with irregular, sharp blades jutting inward from its lip.

With another stolen key, Radu opened the portal to the chambers below, disabled the portcullis trap, and entered the ring of cages. The place stank of musk and dung and rotten meat. It stank of old, piss-sodden straw. It stank of old, abandoned death. Only one of the six cages was occupied, and that one by a corpse. Radu opened the cage door and stepped inside, careless of the filth.

THE PLACE STANK OF MUSK AND DUNG AND ROTTEN MEAT . . . IT STANK OF OLD, ABANDONED DEATH.

The animal had been glorious in life, its glossy black pelt almost blue in its full health. Now the beast's head was sunken in starvation, and its fur had turned dull as ash. The once-deadly tentacles lay flaccid beside its feline body like a pair of leashes left on the carcass of an unloved dog.

As Radu stared at the dead animal, the shutters of the three inner cages jerked to life, rising with a deep, ratcheting clangor. A few seconds later, the inner cage walls rose to follow them.

Someone had extinguished the braziers. Radu walked into the sandy pit, torch held high to reveal the intruder who skulked in the shadows so far above the sandy floor of the arena. Whoever it was had known where to find the control box.

"Laskar?" said Radu.

"No, my brother," came a whisper so clearly that it must have been magically projected. Only two members of the Malveen family were sorcerers. Both had been on the Red Horizon when she sank.

"Stannis!" Radu turned back to run up the stairs and greet his miraculously returned sibling.

"No! Stay where you are," said his brother's voice. "I do not wish you to see me—not yet."

Radu wrinkled his nose at a mephitic stench that wafted down from the gallery. "Are you hurt?"

At first, Stannis seemed to ignore the question, but then a halting, coughing giggle burbled down from the shadows. "I would have liked to see you fight the displacer beast, brother."

Radu hesitated, then let go his earlier question and followed the subject his brother preferred. "I was ready," he said confidently.

"I know," said Stannis. "Mother had hoped to save it for your thirteenth birthday, but I had persuaded her to give it to you this year."

"Mother," said Radu. "Is she . . . ?"

"Dead, oh my brother. Murdered by our jealous rivals! Only her late-coming ally saved me from the same fate. Saved me. . . ." Again, his weird giggling filled the chamber before dying in a snuffling choke. Radu walked toward the voice, and his torchlight briefly revealed a naked arm and shoulder, wet and gray as porpoise skin. At the touch of light, Stannis withdrew again into the shadows.

"What has he done to you, brother? And what is that . . . smell?"

"Smell?" said Stannis petulantly. He made an aspirant sound, as if sucking in air over his tongue. "Alas—or perhaps thankfully, considering the state of your birthday present—I do not perceive scents as I did."

"What happened to you?"

"Mother fell before her ally arrived," said Stannis. "The ship was already sinking, and he came upon me in the water. He spared me from drowning by making me . . . as he is . . ." The last syllable faded away in a breathy hiss.

The brothers stood in silence, above in darkness, below in firelight. Neither spoke for half a minute, when Radu raised his head and squared his shoulders as if resolved to a decision. "Where is he now?"

"Soon he shall come to claim the River Hall. He wants a new home, one free from light and fire. You understand, do you not? He is my master. I am tasked with contacting you and Pietro, to bring you here to greet him as our new lord."

"Bring him," said Radu. His hand drifted to the hilt of his sword.

"I cannot defy him. Even if I were immune to his spells, the blood bond subjugates me to his will. Even if I had the charms I hid in my chamb—" He choked off the sentence.

Radu's eyes narrowed as he perceived his brother's innuendo. "The Old Chauncel have looted our home. They took everything."

"Jackals!" said Stannis. "Yet perhaps not everything is lost. There are secrets in the walls of my room. I know your distaste for the Art . . ." Whatever else he was about to say strangled in his throat as Stannis fought against some geas.

"Leave it to me," said Radu. "I shall prepare a fitting welcome for your master."

24 Flamerule 1372:
The Year of Wild Magic

The sun's dying breath still lingered on the horizon as the rapping of stilts echoed in the streets as the lamplighters stalked post-to-post in the warehouse district. Here and there, a few carters hurried home after the long summer day, their clothes still damp in the heat.

Radu leaned back against the slanted roof, listening to the argument that spilled out the garret window and into the street below.

"I won't have these things in my house!" bellowed a man with a weary voice. "Not with my wife and daughter living in the rooms below this sty of yours."

"If you would send the housekeeper up now and then—" protested a younger man.

"Oh, no. Not after what you did to the last one."

WITH A STRAINED GURGLE AND A SPURT OF ARTERIAL BLOOD, THE MAN COLLAPSED AND BEGAN THE QUICK TASK OF DYING.

The younger man snickered. "Such a sensitive creature should not disturb an artist when he is in the throes of artistic passion."

"These . . . *things*. I don't know how you can call them 'art.'"

"You, my perfectly dull brother, cannot. You haven't the first inkling of imagination. You should thank me for giving our family a reputation for something other than pira—"

"Don't you dare speak that word! You are intolerable, you with your obscene paintings and the doxies and—What is that I smell? Devilweed again? Your lips are blue as berries. You told me you'd stopped taking sannish."

"Oh, but I have, Laskar. I find the baccaran lasts much longer, and it makes *you* seem like much more agreeable company. Would you like a taste?"

Laskar choked off his reply. Outside the window, the eavesdropping Radu turned at the sound of laughter from the alley below. There stood a brawny sailor drinking from a pewter flask as he listened to the unexpected source of entertainment. His hard arms were laced with scars, and the cutlass at his hip had the plain, well-tended look of a veteran's blade. His curly hair was still wet from the day's relentless heat.

Radu moved to the edge of the roof and rolled over the side, hanging briefly from his good hand before dropping to the ground. He struck the ground with a dancer's grace.

The sailor started at the surprising arrival. He squinted at Radu's mask and concealing cloak, but then he grinned and proffered his flask. "Listen to them two up there. They're always in a row."

Radu drew his blade and made a brusque salute: a gesture of threat, not respect.

"You can't be serious!" called Chaney from inside his head. "The man was just passing by, having a snort."

The sailor made no such protest as he dropped his flask and whipped his cutlass from its scabbard. He spat at Radu's feet. "Footpad! You'll not have my meager purse, but I'll give you something else." He lunged forward, slashing at his foe's head.

Radu sidestepped the attack and made two quick cuts as the sailor ran past him. Two bright red wounds joined the scars on the man's meaty forearms.

"Great hopping Ilmater!" shouted Chaney. "Have pity on the lout. He's half drunk and no match for you when he isn't. Let him go, Malveen."

Radu replied by hamstringing the man before he could turn around to face him. As the sailor fell to the cobblestones, Radu thrust once more, through the man's throat. With a strained gurgle and a spurt of arterial blood, the man collapsed and began the quick task of dying.

The swordsman wiped his blade and sheathed it. He began to walk away from the man he'd killed.

"Bloody butcher," muttered his ghost. "Merciless bastard. Gods! Help me out here, Radu. I'm running out of names to call you."

The swordsman did not reply, but suddenly he froze in his steps. His head jerked to the side as though some invisible fist had just punched him in the face.

"What?" said the ghost. "What's hap– ulp!"

Behind them, the sailor's body melted into a milky white haze, its liquid essence fading in a matter of seconds into a smoky residue that crept like a fog across the alley stones. It slunk after its killer, drew up and hesitated like a coiling snake, and finally surged all at once through his leather cloak and the clothes beneath, into the man's body.

Radu's jaws clamped shut, and he shook as if struck by lightning. He uttered no sound, but the howling within his mind threatened to shatter his skull from inside.

The screaming subsided, and briefly a white glow spilled out of the eyes of his mask. The swordsman stumbled, caught himself against the wall, and then shook his head violently.

"What . . . in the Nine Hells . . ." Chaney moaned. "How can that happen . . . without the knife?"

Radu touched the mask that hid his ruined face. He felt the sharp fragments of the bone blade that still jutted from his hardened right hand and forearm.

"Oh, no," said the ghost. "That thrice-cursed soul-stealing dagger . . . It's *in* you now, isn't it?"

"Hold there!" shouted a man from the alley's mouth. A trio of Scepters in their black leather armor stood with hands on their truncheons.

Radu glanced behind him. Beyond the alley, the street was bright with only the lightest of traffic. He looked up to the edge of the roofs on either side. The lower one was over fifteen feet high, with no ivy, no trellis, and nothing else to use as a ladder.

The Scepters started toward him.

"Well, that must be the shortest crime spree in the history of Selgaunt," said Chaney. "I wonder if they'll– Hey!"

Radu leaped straight up. The jump carried him just to the roof's edge, where he grabbed the iron gutter with his left hand. The metal crumpled like foil in his grip, but it held his weight long enough for him to scrabble over the edge.

Chaney's voice came screaming up at him, as if momentarily left behind and then pulled quickly back to Radu. "How did you do that?"

Radu looked around, as if expecting to catch a glimpse of his ghost. Seeing nothing, he ran across the rooftops, leaping from house to house as he left the shouts of the city guard behind him.

Chaney strove to remain close to his killer, but he still floundered in his newfound intangibility. Dragged helplessly in Radu's wake, he muttered, "How I miss the hells."

13 Uktar 1351: Year of the Crown

A black stain poured into the River Hall's great stream, blotting out the light as it flowed west toward the reflecting pool. From the inky waters emerged a half-naked figure, barely more man than eel. Its flesh was the color of deep bruises, and its eyes had swollen into the shape and hue of caviar.

"Welcome home," said Radu. He stood well back from the pool, a sheathed sword at his hip.

"Ah, my dearest brother. It gladdens my heart to know you answered my invitation. We are honored today by a most august visitor: my patron. My master. I hope you will embrace him as I have, as your new sire." Stannis turned and genuflected toward the dark water.

A huge figure slowly rose from the water, drawing up the darkness as it emerged. It bore only the faintest resemblance to a man. Blubbery arms ending in black talons stretched back from its body in a dancer's gesture. It had no neck, only a squat, triangular head with a short dorsal ridge. Its maw was a black sphincter that unfolded into a thicket of white needles when it smiled.

Radu bowed neatly, like a fencer before a match.

"Welcome to House Malveen, Master," said Stannis, still bowing. "See how my obedient brother honors you?"

The sea vampire oozed its bulk onto the marble floor. Its thick body tapered gradually into a single fluke, undulating as it urged slowly forward. Before it came within striking distance of the young swordsman, the thing skirted sideways, cautious.

"Piteous," rumbled the creature. "I am neither blind nor deaf nor foolish. Your mother would have wept to see such a feeble attempt to gull me. I can taste his defiance from here, and your miserable subterfuge . . . Ah! What did you plan? To delay me until dawn and then break the shutters? Already the sun is venomous to you as well. What harms me destroys such as you, Stannis. I am most displeased."

"Master, I beg you not to punish Radu for my offense. He is but a boy, subject to my fallible judgment. Let him be your ambassador to the daylight world. He can serve you far more ably without the blessing of your embrace."

"Bah! Why should I grant you any favor, ungrateful whelp? Perhaps this brother will make a better apprentice than you. He looks . . . honest."

"No!" Stannis put his head on the floor and pleaded. "Master, he has no talent for sorcery. Only my mother and I of all the family–"

Radu watched the exchange impassively.

"Then show me, Stannis. Show me your power. Slay him with this shadow magic of yours, and perhaps I will forgive your treachery. The newly reborn are as infants, and I am a merciful sire."

The vampires locked gazes, and in an instant Stannis wavered, dominated by his master's will. He trembled as he looked up toward his younger brother. "Forgive me, brother."

Radu drew his sword as Stannis rose to his feet, crooning a phrase of arcane power. An instant later, three sizzling black beads of magic flew from the sorcerer's fingers. The magic missiles vanished as they struck an invisible barrier a few feet from Radu's flesh. Upon Radu's finger, a silver band glittered as its magic took effect. The boy's lip curled in distaste as he felt the ring's magic shield him from his brother's spell.

Radu hesitated, his sword poised to strike Stannis. Then he bolted away, dashing through an open door in the northern wall.

"After him!" commanded Stannis's master. He oozed his great bulk across the floor. "He must not leave the house."

"As you command, my master," said Stannis. He loped awkwardly after his brother, through the Malveen gallery, and into the secret door to the baiting pit. "He cannot escape us here!"

The elder vampire followed cautiously, allowing his minion to race ahead.

Stannis found his brother in the arena, far beneath the crackling braziers

THE VAMPIRES LOCKED GAZES, AND IN AN INSTANT STANNIS WAVERED, DOMINATED BY HIS MASTER'S WILL.

on the viewing rail. Thrust point-first into the stained sands around the pit were four clusters of weapons—poniards, rapiers, longswords, sabers, and more—all the arms reserved for those who had fought beasts for the illicit entertainment of Vilsek Malveen's friends and business associates. Each miniature armory surrounded a tall iron torch with hot yellow flames leaping from its cup.

Radu looked up at his transformed brother. He held a short spear in one hand, a slender longsword in the other. "Come," he said.

Stannis paused at the railing. "I fear you might prick me with that blade of yours, my brother." He muttered a few words that levitated him a few feet into the air. There he spat into his clawed hands, chanting a new spell that conjured shadowy globs from his phlegm. He hurled them one after another at the torches surrounding the fanged pit. Where they struck, they swallowed up the light, leaving only three narrow spokes of illumination radiating from the fanged abyss to the outer edges of the arena floor. Radu briefly appeared in one of the lighted paths, looked up to spot his hovering brother, and returned once more to the shadows.

"Fool!" bellowed the vampire master, emerging from the stairway. "Do not squander your power on such trifling displays. Dispatch him, or I shall bleed you both to husks."

Stannis cringed. "Master," he said, making an awkward bow as he hovered, looking more like a tide-swept shrimp than a man or a vampire. He descended toward the shadow-enshrouded pit, the words to another dweomer already on his wormlike lips.

"Ah!" He shouted as a spear pierced his thigh. The spell died upon his lips.

Radu emerged from the shadows again, briefly disoriented from his blindness. Before he could spy his adversary's new location, Stannis screeched and flew at him, claws extended.

Radu froze, seemingly paralyzed by the sight of his hideously transformed sibling hurtling toward him. He lowered his guard and stared as if dumbfounded, but an instant before his brother's hands were at his throat, he dropped to one knee and thrust high, piercing Stannis through one outstretched palm.

The fledgling vampire screamed an inarticulate protest as he tumbled together with Radu into the shadows. His body struck the sandy floor of the pit like a sack of grain. A second later came a wet, penetrating sound.

"Nooo!" howled Stannis.

Above the arena, his master rose from the stands for a better vantage. His horrid face contorted in an expression of ire, he wiped the air before him in a triple gesture of dispelling. The three spheres of darkness vanished like smoke in a gale. As they dispersed, a riotous clamor of chains and iron plates filled the room, all but drowning Stannis's shriek as one of the three great cage portals crashed down upon his body. Radu's sword still transfixed his brother's scaly hand, its point thrust deep into the packed sand.

"Formidable," murmured the vampire, descending to the sand on the other side of the fanged pit. "I suspected I had encountered a weaker twig of the Malveen family when I answered Velonya's call. Come to me, Radu Malveen, and I shall make you ageless."

Radu walked away from his brother's pinned body and pulled another sword from a nearby cluster of blades. He gave the vampire a perfunctory salute, keeping his gaze fixed on his opponent's chest rather than his eyes. He approached with the careful grace of a fencer facing a worthy opponent.

The vampire spoke an arcane word, and his black eyes roiled with purple light. He glanced briefly at the other weapons before looking back to the sword in Radu's hand.

"Useless," said the vampire. "You cannot harm me with such weapons. Even your weakling brother is not truly dead, though his powers are but weak echoes of my own. Finish him and give yourself to me. Do this, and I shall put you at my right hand."

"Defend yourself," said Radu. "I long for a contest."

The vampire made an airy snort through the spiracles that had been its nose. "Your father must have been a wan thing indeed to have so thinned Velonya's sorcerous blood— Ah!"

Before the vampire realized its peril, Radu darted forward and threw himself into a long, low lunge, his blade piercing the sea vampire's abdomen. The sword sank deep into the creature's thick hide before whipping out again, trailing a black tongue of ichor. Quick as a gnat, Radu recovered his stance and retreated three steps.

"You . . . You nibbling lamprey!" The vampire's bass voice turned momentarily thin and brittle. "I shall show you a bite!"

The hard-packed sand of the arena jumped as the massive undead creature relinquished its levitation and struck the ground. The resulting tremor jarred Radu's combat stance, and before the boy could recover, the creature whirled around and swept its heavy tail across his legs.

Radu fell hard on the sand, his breath exploding out of him as the blow compressed his lungs and stunned his heart. Somehow he kept his grip on the sword and tried to raise it as the gigantic black tail rose up and fell upon him a second time. The sound of his cracking ribs echoed off the arena's granite walls, and a spray of blood burst from between his teeth. His hands jerked with the rest of his body, and his sword fell uselessly to the floor.

Radu rolled away barely in time to avoid the killing blow. When the vampire's tail descended again, it fell on barren sand, evincing a cloud of yellow dust. Deep in its belly, the creature made a low, rhythmic, tidal sound that might have been a malicious chortle. It pursued its fleeing foe, leaving a dry, serpentine wake on the sandy floor.

Radu kept rolling away from the vampire until he managed to get first

THE SOUND OF HIS CRACKING RIBS ECHOED OFF THE ARENA'S GRANITE WALLS, AND A SPRAY OF BLOOD BURST FORTH FROM BETWEEN HIS TEETH.

one and then both legs beneath him. His head lolled briefly, and he swayed for a second as he summoned back his bearings by dint of will. With two fingers, he wiped the blood that streamed from his nose and flicked it away as he glanced sideways to see his enemy approaching.

The vampire wriggled forward, and the sand beneath it hissed. Radu retreated around the spiked hole, backing up to the very edge of one of the clusters of weapons. Instead of grabbing another blade, he pulled the iron torch from its place.

Beneath the vampire, the sand ceased its hissing. The creature hesitated and lowered his gaze in a wary gesture, licking the air to taste what it could not smell. "Clever lad," he said. "You lure me."

"Lured," corrected Radu. He threw the torch to the ground, and flames erupted from beneath the light screen of sand that obscured the oil-soaked floor. The fire engulfed the creature and continued to rise in a whooshing ring all around the black pit at the center of the arena.

The vampire howled and cursed in tongues ancient and arcane. The crackling flames devoured whatever spells they were meant to call, and the creature flailed its bulk from side to side, seeking escape from the inferno.

Radu had already tumbled beyond the ring of oil, a long spear in his hands. He braced the butt of his weapon in the sand beyond the fiery trap. When the vampire thrashed toward him, he thrust the point of the spear into his face. He pushed with all his juvenile strength at a creature four times his mass, to no avail. Instead the enemy did the work for him, yearning and straining to touch the insolent foe who had stung him so. As his black and flaming claw reached for Radu's throat, the spear sank deeper into the vampire's skull, and the wailing monster wrenched away, still crackling in the fire.

They danced together around the circle, Radu forming at every step a smaller mirror to his foe's path. Soon the flames from the sand subsided, but the vampire's flesh continued to bubble, its acrid fat snapping and bursting through the skin. Its struggles left a trail of dark essence on the floor, and there the flames lingered, blushing indigo and incarnadine.

At last, the vampire rose up on its ruined tail, poised untenably before the long, hungry teeth of the central pit. Radu thrust the spear up into the vampire's throat, pushing it back. The creature made one last frail scream and fell backward into the hole, leaving steaming gobbets of its flesh where it fell through the razor teeth of the fanged pit.

Radu stepped forward to gaze down into the abyss. He stood there for long seconds, staring down after the monster as his own dark thoughts curdled into an unspeakable shape. At last he turned away, and with another torch he seared the remaining gore from the spikes before turning back to the gate that pinned his transformed brother to the floor.

"I can feel his death," wheezed Stannis. "It fills me with great hunger. Oh, my brother, release me from this weight, and together we shall feed."

Radu threw the lever that released the counterweight. As the heavy door rose from his brother's broken body, he watched as Stannis's dark flesh grew turgid with unholy vigor. Radu deliberated only a moment before thrusting his sword through his brother's other hand.

"Radu!" screamed Stannis. "What are you doing?"

"How long before you turn on us, brother?" Radu knelt beside him, holding the flame near. "I must protect the family."

"I would never harm them!" wept Stannis. "I swear it, Radu. As your brother, I swear it!"

Radu frowned down at his older brother and raised the iron torch above his head.

"As your brother, Radu, I implore you!" pleaded Stannis. "As your own *blood!*"

They stared into each other's faces, each searching for some last glimmer of human mercy in his brother's eyes. Gradually, Radu lowered the torch. "No one must see you," he said. "Never."

"It shall be as you say," crooned Stannis.

"And you shall obey me in all things and never let harm come to our brothers who still live."

Stannis squinted at the remark. "I swear it, oh my brother. May you cast me into that pit the day I fail you."

24 Flamerule 1372: The Year of Wild Magic

They traveled once more through the twisting avenues of the boat city. It had come together in a completely different configuration from the previous night. Earlier they had spied the ship of the witch to whom Radu had sold his infernal sword, yet the swordsman turned away and continued his search without asking her for directions.

At last, Radu spotted the red tent on its punt nestled between a pair of trawlers.

Chaney had not said a word in hours, so he was surprised when the usually silent Radu suddenly spoke.

"I am not a monster."

"Of course," said Chaney. "I see your point, since you put it that way. Now, let's just walk quietly back to the city and see if the nice clerics of Ilmater have any more room in their madhouse."

Radu lowered his head and snorted. He started toward the sword merchant's tent. He spied the one-eyed man outside, pissing into the narrow channel between his boat and the next.

"What do you hope to gain?" Chaney called after him. His voice sounded distant, as if he wished to be as far away from Radu as possible. "Money? Even if you give it to your family, how will they account for it? You'll only bring them down again."

The one-eyed sword merchant fastened his trousers and turned to greet the visitor. "Ah, it's you. Come back to buy another sword, have you?"

"No," said Radu. He nodded toward the scrolls hanging from the merchant's belt. "I've come to sell."

Dave Gross is co-author of *The Halls of Stormweather* and author of *Black Wolf.* In his upcoming *Lord of Stormweather,* the fates of Radu Malveen, Thamalon Uskevren, Erevis Cale, and Tamlin Uskevren converge with spectacular and deadly results.

JONGRATH'S MILL

by Ed Greenwood · illustrated by David Day

Most folk are familiar with grain mills that stand beside streams and use water to turn their creaking waterwheels. Many of these mills exist throughout Cormyr, Sembia, the Dales, the Vast, and the Western Heartlands. Yet there are also thousands of unconventional mills in farm backlands across Faerûn. These mills pop up where water is scarce or where the land lies so low that a millpond would likely cause flooding.

One better-known "waterless mill" is Jongrath's Mill in the countryside of Tethyr. It's a day's ride east of Krennashar, in the vast expanse of what travelers on the Trade Way sometimes call Lower Tethyr. Some parts of the county of Bardshyr, in the Duchy of the Purple Marches, are well watered, but other areas have stretches where water lies deep and must be drawn up from wells. In these areas, livestock clusters around muddy waterholes, and streams are but tiny trickles, certainly not strong enough to turn a mill's wheel.

Ilmurk Jongrath (CG male human Exp6/War2) makes his home, and his livelihood, in a deep-water area, where water-powered mills are out of the question. Jongrath owns a number of draft horses—great lumbering giants, patient, stolid, and capable of carrying and moving great burdens if harnessed properly—that he uses to power his mill rather than water.

WHAT MEETS THE EYE

Jongrath has let much of his grazing land return to scrub saplings and shrubs—a ready source of kindling and fence-poles when he must clear it. The miller uses stones and stumps for border fences, and otherwise lets his livestock roam freely around the property. Those stumps have given Jongrath's farm its local name: Stump Hill.

A visitor to Stump Hill finds not only grazed wilderlands, but a small, neat cottage, sturdy but unadorned wooden stables, and a mill-shed with wood-shingled roofs, all gathered around the millrun: a circular patch of hoof-trodden dirt with a gigantic spoked wheel at its center.

Wooden angle-braces hold up a wood collar that in turn holds a barrel-sized central shaft (made up of many tree-trunks bound together with strapping) upright as it turns in a smooth stone socket.

Wooden tripod-braces hold a horizontal shaft in position overhead as it reaches over the horsepath to hold a toothed cogwheel interlocked with the spokes of the upright shaft. As the upright shaft turns, it turns the cogwheel and thus turns its shaft. The far end of the shaft vanishes into the mill shed, where grinding can be completed under cover from harsh weather and hungry birds.

When he's milling, Jongrath's horses walk endlessly in a circle, harnessed to the bars of the central capstan that protrude like spokes on a wheel. Their efforts turn the overhead cogwheel whose teeth are interlocked with the capstan-spokes and in turn spins the shaft linked to it. At the far end of that shaft, inside the mill shed, is a millstone that grinds against another stationary millstone—and by means of another shaft-mounted toothed wheel, at the same time operates a pump that lifts deep water to surface troughs, to water Jongrath's stock.

From time to time cogs wear or break off wheels, but Jongrath grinds grain into flour for his neighboring farmers and so has plenty of coin saved up to pay for repairs by stonemasons in Myratma or Port Kir. In fact, several of the millstones and cogwheels that he claims have broken are hidden under sacks of flour stored in his shed and are actually unused spares ready for him to put into service when real breakage occurs.

Whenever a sturdy tree becomes available, Jongrath cuts it and adds it to the replacement central shaft he's building in the mill shed. Made of numerous thick trunks strapped together and then soaked in oil to keep them from rotting, the shaft rests on trestles at one end of the mill shed, waiting for the day when the old shaft starts to crack and needs replacing.

Jongrath doesn't make all of his coin from milling and stock sales—he's something of an entrepreneur who has at least two other sources of income. After his wife died, Jongrath found their house lonely, so he moved into the mill shed, where he sleeps atop his valuables and has his horses nearby in the stables. This has left his small but pleasantly furnished house empty. Jongrath now rents out the house to merchants who come cattle buying and need a place to stay. Since there's no inn nearby, he makes a decent wage from the rent.

Jongrath also delights in painting and runs a profitable part-time business of limning heraldic arms and badges onto shields, armor, wooden plaques, and coach doors. A simple shield (for a retainer or man-at-arms) costs about 6 gp, less if the shield

uses no more than two colors. A typical knight's shield bearing a large and intricate blazon costs 20 gp (25 gp for a rush order). He follows the same pricing structure for body armor but adds an additional 5 gp on top of those listed for shields.

Nobles of Tethyr consider such prices to be splendid bargains since heralds add several hundreds of gold pieces to Jongrath's prices. He doesn't do work on fabrics but sometimes designs arms for those who want him to, and he does touch-up work on scarred or dirty arms brought to him (3 gp for small items, 12 gp for large items).

BLAZONRY BEKNIGHTED

The practice that gets Jongrath in the most trouble with local heralds is his design work—which infringes (or so they claim) on their exclusive expertise. Jongrath cheerfully acknowledges that the heralds are the experts but says there's nothing "exclusive" about heraldry that gives them the sole right to make designs. As evidence in favor of this view, he points out the thousands of crafter's marks that furniture-carvers, bottle-blowers, and weavers all across Faerûn work into their wares (distinctive marks or badges that heralds have neither designed nor approved).

Jongrath openly invites heralds to examine his work for mistakes and asserts that they won't find any. A herald might well have designed something differently than he did, but his designs aren't wrong.

None of these arguments have persuaded the local heralds Aldrur Heriburt (LN male human Exp8), based in Myratma, and Chastus Beldrorn (LN male human Exp5/War1), based in Darrowmar, to desist in their efforts to have Jongrath fined, jailed, and prohibited by duchal decree from practicing any form of blazonry.

Although the two heralds are pompous, persistent men with wealth and ready access to officials on their side, the Duchess of the Purple Marches is amused by Jongrath, whom she visits on occasions when she goes incognito as Lady Farefar and rents his house while she goes hawking. She refuses to sign any such decree that Heriburt and Beldrorn place before her.

The two heralds aren't of the exalted ranks of heralds who work regularly for the nobility, keep rolls of arms for a realm, and administer realm-wide heraldic law, but they furiously defend what little authority they have, which happens to be registration of blazonry practiced by non-nobles in the Purple Marches (such as ship's banners, trading coster badges and symbols, millers' marks on sacking, and so on). Jongrath offends them, and they're determined to have him punished and put out of all heraldic affairs.

Jongrath is in turn irritated by the stiff letters and personal rudeness the heralds have offered him—in particular, an expedition led by Beldorn in which hireswords tried to seize several freshly emblazoned shields drying in Jongrath's stables and retreated only after the miller had been forced to pin several mercenary arms and wrists to shed-posts with shafts from his crossbow. Jongrath is determined not to let the heralds dictate to him in any way, and he finds every possible opportunity to needle and annoy them.

A bitter battle has now erupted between the heralds and Jongrath. The latest turn of events is that the heralds have been spreading rumors that Jongrath is a thief, a Calishite agent, and a rebel seeking to overthrow the new regime in Tethyr. Jongrath, in response, has invited King Haedrak to personally investigate "all the doings and practices of me, Ilmurk Jongrath, of Stump Hill, with an eye to establishing my personal loyalty to the crown and clearing my name of the aspersions cast by increasingly dishonest and immoderate heralds."

King Haedrak is reported to have replied verbally (when Jongrath's letter was read to him), "I'm rather busy right now, but tell the good miller that I've every confidence in him and shall continue to do so until I personally find evidence otherwise. He should await my visit, in the next year or two, and continue to enjoy his good name entirely untrammeled until that time."

ELMINSTER SAITH:

'Tis folk like Ilmurk Jongrath that make dwelling in the Realms such a delight: stubborn and inventive, desiring to be commanded by no one and yet with no ambition to rule or oppress others. I know a thing or three about heraldry—several of the tomes the High Heralds consult were compiled by me some centuries back using a spell that duplicates a drawing in hue and shape, creating an identical work of the original—and Jongrath's claims are true: No self-granted charter can give any herald exclusive rights to anything (except where a royal grant, warrant, or charter gives that herald or a body of heralds exclusive rights within a realm, city, or territory that the grantor has lawful writ over), and Jongrath's designs contain no heraldic mistakes. Most of them are so simple, mind, that it would be hard to find room to make a mistake. As for his battles with the heralds—well, ahem; in his comportment, know ye, he reminds me of . . . me.

A rumor persists that the mill houses a powerful shield left behind by a cleric who was killed in battle before she could return to pay Jongrath for his heraldic work. Indeed, Jongrath does retain items when his clients are unable to pay him or fail to return for the finished product, and many of them are worth a pretty penny. One such item is a large steel shield that looks rather ordinary in its design. Looks are deceiving in this case, for despite its plain appearance, the shield houses powerful magic. Jongrath has heard the rumors, and always the honorable businessman, he's taken great pains to hide the shield, hoping that his client will return one day to claim it.

SHIELD OF SENSES

This *+1 animated, fire resistance large steel shield* automatically confers *remove blindness/deafness* twice per day when the wearer is exposed to an attack that causes blindness or deafness, whether the effect is normal or magical in nature.

Caster level: 12th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects remove blindness/deafness, resist elements;* **Market Price:** 49,170 gp; **Cost to Create:** 24,585 gp + 1,966 XP.

JONGRATH'S MILL

1. Jongrath keeps his wealth in unused well shafts that were dug by previous landowners in days when there was more water and shallow wells yielded all that was needed. He blocks the shafts by tumbling large stones down them until cavities approximately 10 feet deep are left. Then the miller makes long, narrow coin-boxes that hang down the shafts from cables whose ends are anchored to the stones set around the lip of the well. Those who know of them can easily draw the boxes up from the well shafts, but Jongrath has covered all but one of these unused wells with old, worn-out millstones. It takes a successful Search check (DC 20) to notice that the millstones look recently placed. The well that isn't covered by millstones holds his "ready money," and he hides it with a flat stone atop which is his compost heap (Search check, DC 20).

2. Jongrath has devised "snap-traps," which he places at all windows and doors of the mill shed to catch and kill vermin (to keep grain and milled flour from being eaten). Jongrath also encourages rodent-eating snakes to dwell in the shed (he and the snakes live quite happily together, although more than one visitor has been startled to see a serpent slithering nearby).

3. Jongrath can't leave his heraldic work to dry in the mill shed (they'd be covered in flour within hours), and he dislikes cluttering up his house with his temporary tables (boards he places on saw-horses), so freshly painted shields and wooden plaques are slung on rafters in the stables to dry.

4. Dwarf-made grinding-wheels are affixed to the overhead shaft under a weather-cover here; when Jongrath needs tools sharpened, he simply sets up a stepladder and grinds away.

Silicon Sorcery

by Clifford Horowitz
illustrations provided by Turbine Games

FROM YOUR DESKTOP TO YOUR TABLETOP

SIXTEEN NEW FEATS

Asheron's Call 2 takes place in the world of Dereth where, some 300 years ago, the wizard Asheron created vaults to protect the major races from the horrid force responsible for wreaking the Devastation on the surface. You play one of the first heroes called forth from these underground shelters to reclaim the planet from the evil that has taken root there. Like many other games, this one offers monsters to slay, ruins to clear, and quests to fulfill. However, Turbine Entertainment promises both an interactive storyline built on the actions of players and a dynamic quest system to ensure that your special objectives will be more than droll handouts from automated vendors.

In line with its unusual degree of dynamism, *Asheron's Call 2* has a new skill system that allows you to customize your character on an ongoing basis. As your character advances, you can purchase new abilities for her from skill trees, so long as she meets the prerequisites. These abilities allow your character to gain all sorts of advantages, such as the ability to strike harder in combat, a better chance for critical hits, or a greater range with a bow. These abilities bear a striking resemblance to feats in the D&D game, and provide ideas for many new feats. In fact, there is a tremendous amount of overlap between the abilities offered in the two games, regardless of what they might be called.

Below is a small selection of the special abilities available to characters in the world of Dereth.

BOWL OVER

Your attacks with thrown weapons can knock opponents off their feet.

Prerequisites: Str 15+, Heft, Rout, Windup.

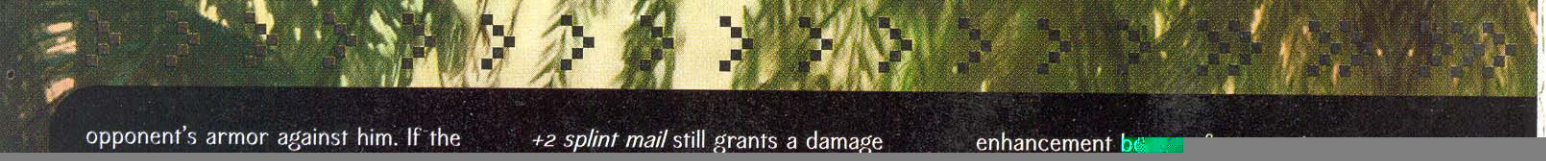
Benefit: Whenever you deal 10 or more points of damage to an opponent with a thrown weapon, you may make a trip attack as a free action against the same target. If you have the Improved Trip feat, you do not gain a free attack if the target falls. When you make a trip attack in this manner, you cannot be tripped in turn because it's the thrown weapon that's tripping your opponent, not your body.

CRUSH

Your blows use the weight of an opponent's armor against him, adding to the power of your own strikes.

Prerequisites: Str 15+, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (any bludgeoning weapon).

Benefit: When using the Power Attack feat with a bludgeoning weapon that you have chosen for the weapon focus feat, you can use your



opponent's armor against him. If the +2 *splint mail* still grants a damage enhancement b

Prerequisites: Str 15+, Windup.

Benefit: You may add 150% of your Strength bonus to all damage rolls for thrown weapons instead of the Strength bonus you would normally add. If you are using weapons in both hands, this feat applies only to weapons thrown with your primary hand.

MAIM

Your blows are particularly painful and damaging.

Prerequisites: Wis 15+, Weapon Specialization (any weapon), base attack bonus +6 or higher.

Benefits: For every 10 points of damage you deal with a single strike, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + the base attack bonus of the blow just landed) or take a -1 penalty on his attack rolls. This penalty lasts for 1 minute or until the foe receives healing equivalent to a *cure light wounds* spell or greater.

Special: Opponents immune to stunning attacks, pain, or critical hits are not affected by this ability.

PERIPHERAL BLOW

You can exploit a distracted opponent's defensive weaknesses.

Prerequisites: Dex 15+, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: If you are flanking an opponent, you may ignore 2 points of her armor bonus when making your attack. If the opponent has no armor bonus to her Armor Class, this feat provides no benefit.

RIPOSTE

You are adept at striking from a defensive posture.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Expertise, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: Use Expertise as you normally would. If an opponent attacks you and misses, you gain a +2 bonus on the first attack roll you make against that opponent during the following round.

ROUT

Your attacks with thrown weapons can drive opponents back.

Prerequisites: Str 13+, Windup.

Benefit: Any attack you make with a thrown weapon weighing at least 2 pounds also affects your opponent as if you had performed a bull rush. You don't actually move or provoke attacks of opportunity, nor can you push your opponent back more than 5 feet or move along with the defender.

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO SEE CIVILIZATION RESTORED?

SURGE STEP

You may charge for greater distances than you otherwise could. This ability applies only to charges, not to any other type of movement.

Benefit: Your charge distance increases by 5 feet.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times, and its effects stack. Such stacking might even increase your charge distance beyond your normal movement allowance.

UNBALANCE

Your successful melee attacks don't necessarily knock an opponent to the ground, but they consistently erode an opponent's stability.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Expertise, Improved Trip, base attack bonus +5.

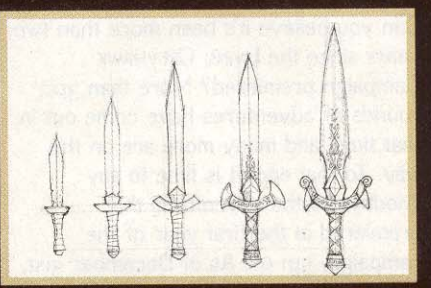
Benefit: Any time you deal more than 10 points of damage to an opponent with a single melee attack, that opponent suffers a -2 penalty on all Strength checks made to resist trip attempts until the beginning of your next action.

UNPREDICTABLE BLOW

Your wild swings are nearly impossible for an opponent to parry.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You can designate any attack with a melee weapon to be an unpredictable blow. Designating an attack as an unpredictable blow is a free action that you can take once per round. When you declare that you are making an unpredictable blow, you gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll. However, because of the erratic motion of the weapon, you lose any Strength bonus that you would otherwise add to damage and cannot make a successful critical hit with that attack.



WINDUP

You have a throwing technique that lets you put extra force into a hurled attack.

Prerequisite: Str 13+.

Benefit: On your action, before making your attack rolls for the round, you may choose to subtract a number from all attack rolls for thrown weapons and add the same number to all damage rolls for those weapons. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. The penalty on attacks and bonus on damage apply until your next action.

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Editor: Erik Mona • Campaign Director: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Contributing Reporters: Jason Bulmahn and David Christ
Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron. —Cuthbertine proverb

CAMPAIGN NEWS

YOU'RE OUTTA HERE!

Can you believe it's been more than two years since the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign premiered? More than 300 rounds of adventures have come out in that time, and many more are on the way. To that end, it is time to say goodbye to the adventures that premiered in the first year of the campaign, 591 CY. As of December 31st, 2002, all adventures designated "Year 1" have been retired from the campaign. Although it may take some time to get the RPGA database updated to reflect this change, this is the official notice that after that date, no year one adventure should be ordered or run.

BUTTONS? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING BUTTONS!

At last summer's Gen Con US and Gen Con UK, the RPGA handed out special buttons as a way to thank all members who attended and visited the RPGA booth. These buttons give bonuses to different kinds of rolls while playing an RPGA scenario. The buttons are official and are legal to use in the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign. For more details on these items, please check out the RPGA website at **www.wizards.com/rpga.**

THE LIVING GREYHAWK CAMPAIGN SOURCEBOOK

In *DRAGON* #302, we briefly touched on some of the changes coming for Year 3 of the campaign. This month, we delve more deeply into some of those changes.

The first of these changes is the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*, a new resource that combines all previous campaign rules updates into a single free downloadable volume. The sourcebook's 40+ pages might seem intimidating, but the easy-to-reference book should provide a valuable resource to LIVING GREYHAWK DMs and players.

The *Campaign Sourcebook* includes several official rulings, answers to commonly asked questions about the campaign, and additional information aimed at making it easier to introduce new players into the campaign.

By the time you read this, the LIVING GREYHAWK *Campaign Sourcebook* should be available on the LIVING GREYHAWK website at **www.living-greyhawk.com.** Here's an overview of what you'll find within its pages:

Chapter One: What is a "Living" Campaign?

This is the most common question asked by new members of the RPGA. This chapter is an introduction to the concept of LIVING campaigns, giving an overview of how a campaign is managed and what players must know and do to participate.

Chapter Two: Living Greyhawk Primer

This chapter introduces the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign, briefly explaining some things that make it unique among LIVING campaigns. It explains the regional system and the different kinds of scenarios and events available to interested players and DMs.

Chapter Three: Character Generation Guidelines

The rules used to make a starting character for the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign are outlined here. The chapter includes a list of books you will need to play and any changes to the core rules that have been made specifically for LIVING GREYHAWK. This section contains very few changes from what you most likely already know. We have included a complete list of legal gods, their domains, and favorite weapons to make it easier to pick for your cleric or paladin.

Chapter Four: Adventure Record and Master Item Logsheet

This section explains the biggest changes to the campaign. We've revamped what used to be called the Adventure Cert into an easier-to-use form. Now known as the Adventure Record, this full-page colored certificate will make it much easier to keep your character's records up to date and in order.

For starters, you'll no longer have to keep track of total character wealth, and instead will merely record total gold pieces on hand. We've also separated the Time Unit, Gold-on-Hand, and Experience boxes into three different

sections of the Adventure Record, in order to clear up confusion. These boxes are now color coded with new subtotal boxes, which should make it easier to add things up at the end of an adventure.

And, in a move sure to be popular the world over, players no longer must write every single item they own on each Adventure Record. The Master Item Logsheet (MIL) is a single sheet used to track all of your non-*Player's Handbook* equipment (such as magic items). Now, instead of meticulously tracking that stuff every single time you play, you can go months without having to redo it and can manage your gear during down-time at home instead of in a frantic rush between slots at the gaming table.

Chapter Five: Rulebook and Metagame Policy

Although LIVING GREYHAWK follows the core rules of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS as expressed in the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, it also utilizes rules material from other Wizards of the Coast DUNGEONS & DRAGONS products. Chapter Five reviews this additional material and provides guidelines on how it can be used in the campaign.

A newly expanded prestige class list includes additional options from past issues of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Journal*, and a new section on feats explains how your character can take advantage of unusual non-core options.

Chapter Six: Beyond the Core Rules

Certain spells, game issues, and magic items require additional clarification and rules to work in a massive organized play campaign environment. This section details those spells and items, providing additional rules and guidelines on how LIVING GREYHAWK players and DUNGEON MASTERS should handle them when they come up during a game session.

A newly expanded section on spells covers campaign rules designed to handle such thorny issues as *clone*, *lesser planar ally*, *awaken*, and many others. The *Campaign Sourcebook* also features rules on how to bring your comrades back from the dead and how to handle that pesky party member who has fleas and howls at the moon.

Additionally, we've included errata on several magic items and expanded rules on how to use the Leadership feat in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign.

Chapter Seven: Magic Item Creation

This chapter covers how to create magic items. For the most part, we've left this section the same as it's been in the past. Though we've made some modifications to how a player determines what his character can make, the actual rules covering the creation process have not changed and still follow the guidelines laid out in the core D&D rules.

Chapter Eight: Running a Living Greyhawk Event

So you want to run a LIVING GREYHAWK event? This chapter was created just for you. It covers everything you need to know as a judge and as an event coordinator. Look for rules on what you can and cannot do, how to handle paperwork, and where to turn if you need a ruling or run into a problem.

Chapter Nine: The LG FAQ

We've gathered the most commonly asked questions about the campaign and compiled them (along with answers) in this helpful chapter. Before you send an email to a campaign administrator, please check the *Campaign Sourcebook* to ensure that your question hasn't already been answered.

Chapter Ten: Contacts, Websites, & Message Boards

This chapter might be called the Who's Who of LIVING GREYHAWK, with a full contact list for the campaign's directing Circle as well as the Points of Contact for all LIVING GREYHAWK regions. Also included are regional website links and links to various campaign message boards and mailing lists.

In Summary

As you can see, the *Campaign Sourcebook* is stocked full of LIVING GREYHAWK goodness, including all the rules that you as a player or DM must know to play in the campaign. Updates to the *Campaign Sourcebook* will be considered every 6 months, although we will do our best to leave the document unchanged for as long as possible.

We know that change for the sake of change is bad, but in this case the change was needed. Some checks and balances needed to be put into the system before it overloaded itself and fell apart. We want the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign to be around for a long time, and we believe that with these new rules and the help of our massive and dedicated staff, we can continue to bring you what we think is the greatest LIVING campaign for years to come.

BUT I NEED TO PLAY RIGHT NOW!

Okay. So it's past January 1st by the time you're reading this. You have some Year 2 scenarios ordered and are ready to play. How do you handle the paperwork, since you have the old Adventure Certs that came with the scenario from RPGA HQ? Don't sweat it. It's easy.

For regional modules, contact your triad for a new version of the cert. For core events, contact the Circle representative for your meta-region (found in the *Campaign Sourcebook*). You will need to provide your name, RPGA #, event code, and when and where the game is running. He will provide you with an updated Adventure Record for the events you are running. All 593 CY and beyond scenarios will of course already have the correct cert file included. Over the next year, this problem will slowly work itself out and disappear.

What is LIVING GREYHAWK?

LIVING GREYHAWK is the largest, most popular shared-world DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign in the history of gaming. Run under the auspices of the RPGA Network (RPGA), the campaign offers gamers around the world the chance to contribute to the developing history of Oerth by playing specially constructed adventures at conventions, game days, or in the comfort of home. For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit **www.living-greyhawk.com**

PLACES OF MYSTERY

GATEWAYS TO ADVENTURE

by Gary Holian · illustrated by Kalman Andrasofszky

THE DRAGONSHEAD BARROWS

Since the arrival of the Aerdi more than 600 years ago, the uplands warding the peninsula of Onnwal have been known as the Headlands. The ancient Flan called them the Dragonshead Hills, for their stark appearance and for the numerous fierce wyrms hatched in their unforgiving heights. To this day, a handful of great drakes and numerous wyverns range throughout the region, nesting in forlorn crags and mountaintop caverns.

Today, most Headland settlements (notably mines and other delves fashioned by hillfolk) remain within the vicinity of Irongate and the low foothills of Onnwal, near the coast. The relative inaccessibility of the central heights and the inhospitable nature of their environs have kept the bulk of the Headlands free from trespass for most of the last 500 years, but myths and legends of the distant past persist to this day, drawing the attention of scholars and adventurers alike.

The hardy Flan who once populated these hinterlands lived on the westernmost verges of the fabled prehistoric Kingdom of Queen Ehlissa, known today primarily for the Fabulous Nightingale artifact that bears her name. Scholars have long assumed that the hills hold great treasure due to the nature of the hoarding dragons that once called them home, but the Headlands also contain answers to some of the deepest mysteries of the ancient Flan. Until now, however, the hills have kept their most interesting secrets to themselves.

Before the Great Migrations brought new disease, magic, and violence to the Flanaess, wide-ranging tribes of Flan thrived in the hilly regions between the Pomarj and the Hestmark Highlands, but their numbers have dwindled in recent years. The folk of Onnwal refer to the local hillfolk as Headlanders. Numbering about a thousand, the fierce warriors have guarded their ancient burial places ruthlessly for most of their history, often from intrepid explorers seeking the tombs of the *Hradikar*, fearless, dedicated ancient Flan fighters renowned for their courage and bravura.

Totemistic warriors chosen above all others from the hardy hillfolk to represent their clans and serve as a vanguard to the Ahlissan Throne at the city of Karnosa (near modern Irongate), the greatest *Hradikar* often served the queen as personal bodyguards. Like the early Flan heroes Krovis and the warrior-chief Torvan of the Drachensgrab Hills to the west, local heroes like Vestakan the Huntress and the fierce brothers Graguul and Venod gave rise to legends of their own.

Vestakan the Huntress, *Hardikar* of old.

Upon the death of a *Hradikar* (whether in battle or after infirmity forced their retirement and ritual suicide), the local community spared no expense to honor them with elaborate tombs situated near the place of their birth. These hallowed resting places reportedly dot the highest crests of the Headlands landscape, defying discovery by blending naturally with the surrounding terrain. Local dwarves and gnomes, who have inhabited the Headlands for centuries, hate the Flan and deny assistance to those who seek to have anything to do with them, even those planning to desecrate the holy tombs of the *Hradikar*.

Usually located in solitary places, high among the folds of the undulating hills or within carefully sheltered cracks and crevices, the ancient tombs often were covered by a pile of unworked stone and earth, forming an exterior mound that requires extensive excavation to uncover. Some of the larger tombs (such as those dedicated to the heroes mentioned above) are located in exceedingly deep delves, and often include many rough-hewn rooms complete with elaborate traps and *bas-relief* carvings recording the deeds of the deceased *Hradikar*. Rarely, the Flan buried their heroes in the abandoned aeries of dragons, some of which have gained new monstrous inhabitants in the ensuing centuries.

Under the camouflaging rubble, tomb entrances generally feature a bestial totem capstone. Lesser creatures such as mountain lions, wolves, or eagles tend to mark the burial sites of most *Hradikar*, while the greatest of the deceased are honored by images of fantastical creatures such as wyverns, dragons, griffons, or chimeras. Even some of the undisturbed tombs contain little more than mundane weapons and cultural artifacts, but approximately one in eight hold the remains of a great Flan warrior-prince buried along with his weapons and armor, as well as the bodies and accoutrements of his soldiers and personal attendants.

Many such weapons bear the device of the ancient Flan kingdom of Ahlissa (named for its famous Queen), whose sorcerous artificers rival the best weaponsmiths of the modern era. In addition to impressive weapons, many of the tombs contain armor crafted from the hides of powerful or magical beasts, including dragons. Explorations to date have turned up so few examples of such artifice that many Irongate scholars believe the vast bulk of Ancient Ahlissan artifacts remain hidden away. Rumors that a secluded Headlands vale might hide the final resting place of Queen Ehlissa herself fuel much speculation among the adventurers of Irongate, many of whom have more ideas about how to spend the discovered treasure than they do about how to find it.

Flan Headlanders protect the tombs of their honored ancestors from desecration as they have for centuries, and tales of hauntings litter the oral traditions of these proud people. The reports of Aerdi scholars confirm such stories, recounting tales of narrow escapes from numerous undead or vicious monsters who have claimed the delves as their own. Those foolish enough to brave battles with the undead usually balk at taking on the dragons and other winged creatures native to the region.

The Greyhawk Wars, however, changed the Headlands, just as they changed so many other places in the Flanaess. The Headlanders fiercely resisted Scarlet Brotherhood incursions during their occupation of greater Onnwal, and the local tribes lost many of their best warriors, depriving dozens of barrows of their protectors and leaving them open to graverobbers. The Brotherhood's naval blockade and siege of Irongate drove many citizens into the hills, and the armies of Free Onnwal used the lower Headlands as a base of operations, further opening the heights to scrutiny.

Adventurers have flocked to the Free City of Irongate over the last two seasons, following stories of fantastic discoveries in the Dragonshead Barrows (as the tombs are now known). The influx of treasure-seeking explorers echoes the adventuring boom that "made" the Free City of Greyhawk in the 550s, when thrillseekers from throughout the Flanaess converged on the city to exploit the wealth and adventure offered by Castle Greyhawk and the Cairn Hills. Whether the rush will help the city to expand or will plunge it into lawlessness remains for historians to decide.

DM's Notes: The treasures brought back to Irongate are undeniable in both quality and quantity—even the mundane items show evidence of a highly advanced "Bronze Age" culture. The leadership of Free Onnwal recognizes the barrows as a potential source of wealth to fund their insurgency, but remain wary of offending their prospective allies, the Flan hillmen. Magical traps still guard the most important tombs, sometimes involving monsters kept in stasis or devastating discharges of eldritch energy. Early explorations uncovered evidence that one *Hradikar* barrow contained access to a warren of subterranean tunnels linking it to other burial sites. No one knows who created these tunnels, but links to the Underdark seem likely.

The adventuring boom has placed Irongate's government in a tight political situation. On the surface, the city must respect the territorial and burial rites of the Flan hillfolk. Rumors place the number of undiscovered barrows in the hundreds, however, which offers a potential financial boon to the city the likes of which has not been seen in the more than a century since the Turmoil Between Crowns plunged the Great Kingdom into chaos. Publicly, Lord Mayor Cobb Darg and his ministers decry the explorations, but evidence of tacit approval is everywhere.

Despite the increase in explorations, the Headlands remain an extremely dangerous environment, and many intrepid adventures do not return at all. On rare occasions, explorers return to the city with wondrous treasure, attracting the notice of even the otherwise stolid Artificer's Union.

Last Brewfest, a ghostly figure dressed in the livery of the ancient *Hradikar* passed through the city walls and entered the Leaky Lantern, a known hangout of adventurers exploring the Dragonshead Barrows. The apparition scattered the entire house and half the surrounding block before it was subdued by clerics in the employ of the city watch. Some sober voices in government suggest outlawing expeditions into the western

hills, but the decidedly less sober voices of the city's influential adventuring community have so far managed to shout down such proposals.

THE HOOL BEACON

North of the vast meanders of the Javan River, where the Hool Marshes verge upon the dark boughs of the Dreadwood, lies an expanse of swamp some 100 square miles in size. Thickly overgrown, covered with a mixture of cypress trees, saw grass, and other stranger botanical specimens growing out of the muck to create a trackless morass, the bemired ground makes for difficult passage for any would-be explorers. The region is not known for its flora, fauna, or terrain, however, but for the dull green glow at its center, which emanates for miles and serves as a local landmark during murky Hool nights. The light's origin frightens away even the heartiest marshfolk, and has been a source of mystery for years since the light first shone forth. The luminescence intensifies as one approaches its source—the upper reaches of the central keep of a small, ruined fort. The structure resembles a ghostly lighthouse, but most who have seen it consider it an infernal beacon to the underworld.

Located on a low hillock (one of the few patches of solid ground in the region), the long-abandoned structure was once a Keolandish foothold. One of a chain of similar forts constructed more than a century ago to protect the kingdom's southern border during Keoland's ill-fated imperial age, the never-completed keep suffered a series of enervating attacks by local tribes of lizardfolk, who inhabited the place after the exhausted Keolanders finally abandoned it, deciding at last to establish the kingdom's southern frontier in the Dreadwood.

The lizardfolk didn't hold sway for long. Nearly a century ago, the diabolical Cult of the Black Flame, led by a charismatic Suloise high priest known as Ohjos (the "Eye of God"), swept in to claim the ruined works and complete construction of the fort. Although denizens of the marsh shunned the place, word of the cult's increasing outrages soon spread beyond the borders of the Hool. When several youths, including the children of nobility, began disappearing from a neighboring province of Keoland, the local lord, Count Arthemene, assembled a small army, even bidding reluctant old King Nyhan IV to sponsor a contingent of grizzled Dreadwood rangers, known as the Dreadwalkers to assist in the effort. The host marched on the cult's fort, but much to their surprise, they found no evidence of the cult. It had vanished into the mists like a morning fog, leaving the keep totally abandoned save for the grisly remains of the Keolandish younglings.

And so the keep remained until about twenty years ago, when a mage exiled from Keoland took up residence in the lonely fort. Called Baltronus Zemner of Linth, the wizard of some repute (much of it ill) had spent a good deal of his life combing the depths of the Dreadwood looking for the lost magic of the infamous (though by that time extinct) Suel House of Malhel. According to legend, the Malhel came to a cataclysmic end at their own hands after dabbling in long-lost magic in the years following the Great Migrations. Despite longstanding Keoish prohibitions against seeking out the dark heritage of the Malhel, "Baltron" craved this knowledge and could not be dissuaded from its pursuit.

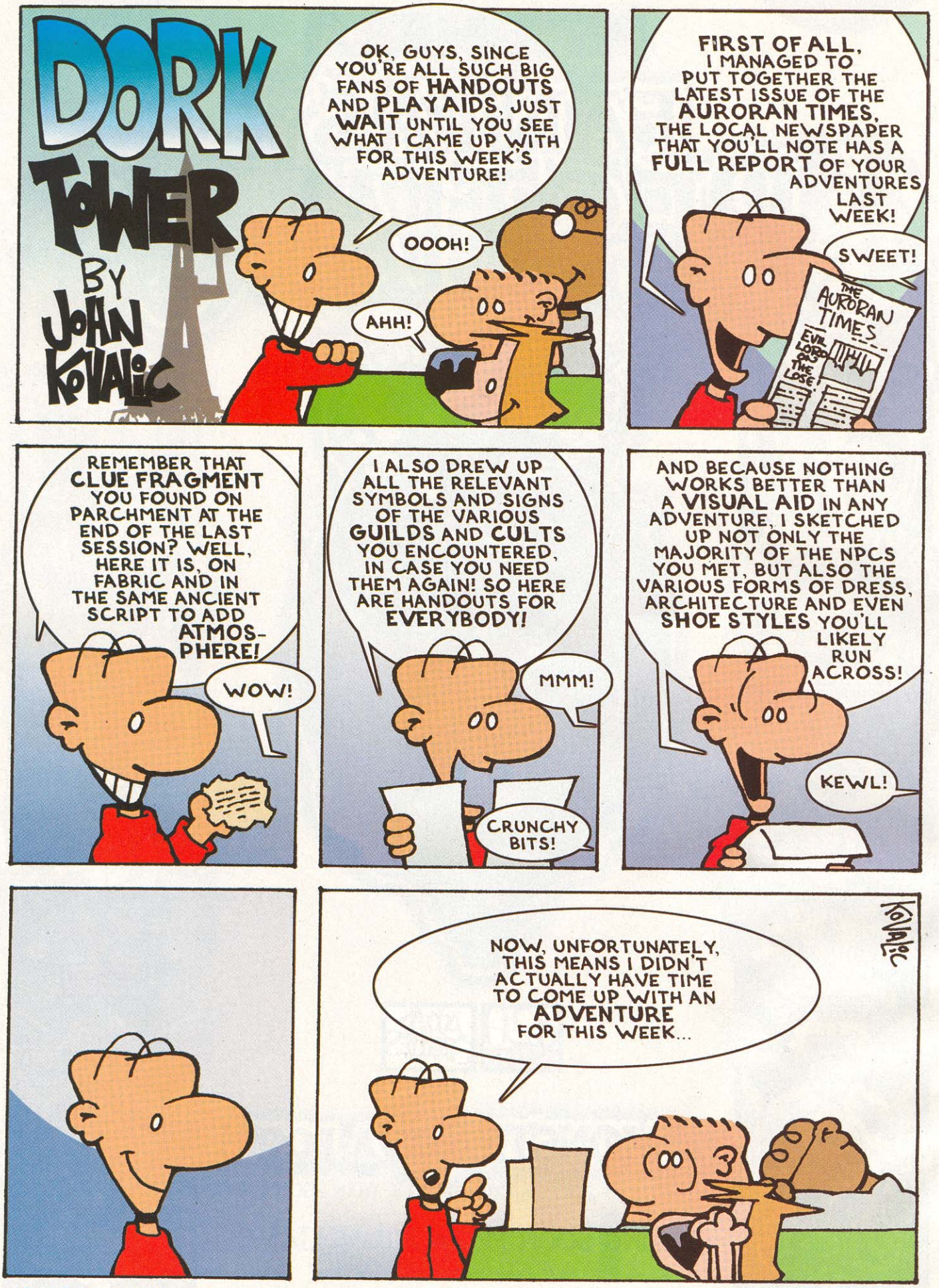
Expelled from the national academy of wizards and hounded from Niole Dra for his efforts, Baltron was able to continue his research undisturbed in the lonely Hool Marsh keep. His research reportedly involved the summoning of a lost elemental power of great might, which he hoped to bend to his will and make his servant. After many years of isolation, Baltron finally succeeded in his summoning, but was unable to control the forces which he unleashed, resulting in a calamitous backfire which destroyed the mage, damaged the keep, and set off the eerie green glow now visible in all directions from the heights of the central tower.

The Silent Ones of Niole Dra, guardians of Keoland's magical secrets, attempted an exploration of the ruins shortly after the explosion, eager to discover Baltron's fate and whereabouts, but the small party was driven away by certain powerful and evil denizens of the swamp, who flocked to the disturbing beacon. One of the Keoish agents, a monk named Eson, braved the beacon alone, but never returned.

Just prior to the Greyhawk Wars, a man named Leptor, a protégé of Baltron and a moderately powerful wizard in his own right, led a party to explore the ruins as part of an expedition sponsored by an organization of adventuring explorers known as the Seekers, who once claimed Baltron as a member. The expedition included the infamous ranger lord Arcturus of Sayre, known throughout the kingdom for his treachery, along with a rag-tag mercenary retinue. Leptor and his band sought out not only Baltron's dark knowledge, but the treasure said to have been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame, hidden and undiscovered somewhere within the citadel. The party's fate remains unknown. Some say that Leptor spent many months trying to reclaim the ruins and their secrets amid the omnipresent threat of lizardfolk attack only to disappear one forlorn night, never to be seen since. Some claim that the Cult of the Black Flame has finally returned. Though rumors abound of treasure and mystery at the site, few in the past decade have attempted to claim the place for themselves.

DM's Notes: Baltron's research appears to have uncovered only fragments of the lost lore of the Malhel. His surviving notes indicate that his experiments succeeded in drawing the attention of an evil and powerful elemental being of the Plane of Ooze. This Mud Lord, possibly the being known as Nakimas to the Suel or to some Oeridian scholars as Bwimb, briefly gained access to Oerth during Baltron's summoning, but the wizard failed utterly to properly ward himself and was sucked into the maw of the crackling nexus that accompanied the elemental lord. The resulting fracture in the veil between the planes has remained open ever since, and is causing the sickly green glow that emanates from the top of the tower. The glow attracts creatures with similar affinities to the nexus and allows malicious (and highly dangerous) elemental creatures to pass unfettered into the Material Plane, further exacerbating the extreme dangers of the region.

The strange energy that seeps from the nexus has fostered a resurgence of the Cult of the Black Flame. According to rumors, Ohjos, the leader of the cult in the last century, was directly descendent from the last scion of House Malhel. He and his followers escaped destruction at the hands of Arthemene's host by opening doorways to other dimensions and leaving the tower from somewhere within its walls, perhaps escaping to a secret underground temple. Leptor and his cohorts tried to discover the secret of the Black Flame, but reportedly met a swift fate at unknown hands.


DORK TOWER
BY JOHN KOVALIC
OK, GUYS, SINCE YOU'RE ALL SUCH BIG FANS OF HANDOUTS AND PLAYAIDS, JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE WHAT I CAME UP WITH FOR THIS WEEK'S ADVENTURE!
OOOH!
AHH!
FIRST OF ALL, I MANAGED TO PUT TOGETHER THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE AURORAN TIMES, THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER THAT YOU'LL NOTE HAS A FULL REPORT OF YOUR ADVENTURES LAST WEEK!
SWEET!
THE AURORAN TIMES
EVIL LORD OF THE LOSE
REMEMBER THAT CLUE FRAGMENT YOU FOUND ON PARCHMENT AT THE END OF THE LAST SESSION? WELL, HERE IT IS, ON FABRIC AND IN THE SAME ANCIENT SCRIPT TO ADD ATMOSPHERE!
WOW!
I ALSO DREW UP ALL THE RELEVANT SYMBOLS AND SIGNS OF THE VARIOUS GUILDS AND CULTS YOU ENCOUNTERED, IN CASE YOU NEED THEM AGAIN! SO HERE ARE HANDOUTS FOR EVERYBODY!
MMM!
CRUNCHY BITS!
AND BECAUSE NOTHING WORKS BETTER THAN A VISUAL AID IN ANY ADVENTURE, I SKETCHED UP NOT ONLY THE MAJORITY OF THE NPCS YOU MET, BUT ALSO THE VARIOUS FORMS OF DRESS, ARCHITECTURE AND EVEN SHOE STYLES YOU'LL LIKELY RUN ACROSS!
KEWL!
NOW, UNFORTUNATELY, THIS MEANS I DIDN'T ACTUALLY HAVE TIME TO COME UP WITH AN ADVENTURE FOR THIS WEEK...
KOVALIC

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Fantasy Cities, Part 1
Using Cities

by Monte Cook

In the broadest of senses, D&D adventures can be broken down into three categories: dungeon adventures, wilderness adventures, and city adventures. Dungeon adventures take place in any defined area and utilize a specific map, usually with every possible area the PCs can travel to detailed. Conversely, wilderness adventures take place in large, loosely defined areas where the PCs have the ability to wander in nearly any direction. City adventures are an interesting mix of the other two, with the additional aspect of a large number of probably friendly creatures around.

Although the *Dungeon Master's Guide* defines a city specifically, this article uses the word more generally. City adventuring can actually take place in a village, town, or metropolis, and many of the same design techniques go into creating any urban community, regardless of its size. Not every city encounter is an adventure, however. Sometimes the PCs just need to buy some rope or get some healing at a temple. Sometimes they just need a place to stay.

There are three basic roles a city can serve: a place that the PCs pass through once, a recurring setting, or the base for a nearby adventure site. (A fourth role: as the site of an adventure itself, will be covered in part 3 of this series.)

The Ninth Rule of Dungeoncraft: When designing a city, consider first its role in the campaign, and then design the appropriate level of detail.

ONE-SHOT CITIES

Very often, a "city" in D&D terms is actually something far smaller—a town, a village, or even a thorp. These places see one session of play at most, as the PCs stop for the night on their way to another location or ask around for rumors before they go off to wherever their goals lead them. Consider how much activity the city will see before you put much work into developing it. If all the PCs are going to do is stay the night or buy rations before moving on, don't spend much time giving the place flavor.

In fact, by giving the locale flavor, you encourage the players (on a metagame level) to stay. If the inhabitants of a city are interesting or the place is special in some way, the PCs are more likely to hang around to learn more. If this is your goal, great, but if it's not your goal, you might end up slowing down the flow of the adventure you have planned.

For a one-shot city, it is unnecessary to develop the place even as much as the *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests. (The *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests determining the community's power center, establishing its authorities, and listing its important NPCs.) This level of development is a waste if you're pretty certain that the PCs won't return to the place and all you need is: "OK, you can stop for the night in Ravensburg, the inn charges you each 8 sp for lodging and a meal. The next day you continue on your travels." Keep in mind, however, that you might be put on the spot when you do this. If a PC says, "Wait a minute, I want to spend some time in Ravensburg and find out some information," then you're going to have to make some stuff up on the fly. Open your *Dungeon Master's Guide* to page 137 and generate (either by rolling or simply choosing) the important details of the city as needed. Make sure you make notes of everything you tell the players in case they come back to Ravensburg (remember that consistency is the major tool of establishing realism and believability in a campaign).

NPC NAMES

Make up a bunch of cool sounding names ahead of time. Keep the list of these NPC names on a sheet of paper, tucked into your *Dungeon Master's Guide*. When you need to name an NPC on the fly, you can use a name from this list. This keeps you from having to make up a name on the spot, preventing you from having to live with recurring NPCs named Bubbo or Snart. Make sure you cross the names off the list as you use them, so you don't end up with two characters named Tallion Evermere in your campaign.

A CITY AS A RECURRING SETTING

If the PCs are going to visit the city frequently (or even just more than

once), you've got to put some real effort into developing it. Now it becomes more than a place where you pull out the price list in the *Player's Handbook* for lodging or for a grappling hook—it becomes a place where people actually live and work. It becomes a real part of the campaign.

Obviously, you need to decide who runs the city and get an idea of the place's population and wealth, just as the *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests, but that's only the beginning. Next, plot out where the PCs are likely to go: an inn, a few shops, and probably a temple.

Ravensburg, for example, might be a large village that lies between a major city and a huge, ancient ruin that the PCs plan to explore over the next few weeks. In Ravensburg, they can rest, buy food and basic supplies, and even find low-level potions and scrolls. The adventurers soon become acquainted with the innkeeper on a first-name basis, and they discover that her daughter wants to learn to be a druid (the druid in the party might be able to offer her some training in exchange for free lodging). The group becomes frequent visitors to an establishment known as Goddar's Supplies, where the dwarf, Goddar, sells them the gear they need. Goddar was the one to tell them about Veronitha, a wizard who makes scrolls and potions. Veronitha also seems to be willing to pay for some of the interesting treasures they recover in the ruins. Lastly, the PCs have had to deal with Brother Eridas at the local temple of Pelor for cures and a *remove curse*. To get expensive gear or sell off really valuable treasures (those worth over 200 gp), however, the PCs must leave Ravensburg and return to a much larger city.

Further, since the PCs spend so much downtime around Ravensburg, they learn that most of the people are farmers, raising corn and grain in surrounding fields. The Yagutha River runs nearby, where a water mill grinds grain into flour. Such facts might be purely incidental (and thus simply add a touch of realism) or they can be important factors in some future adventure. If the PCs know that riverboats frequently haul grain and flour away from the town, they might make use of that fact to sneak out of town when some powerful enemies search for them.

Unless they actually find themselves on the wrong side of the law, however, the PCs have little call to actually meet the steward of the village, Reave Carritol, or his small garrison of constables. The group's presence might warrant close scrutiny from the authorities (powerful, armed, independent troupes are worrisome to such people) but probably not much more than that.

A Bit of Flavor

Let's say that you want to create a community that incites a bit of interest as the PCs pass through it, perhaps as the set-up to a side adventure or, to foreshadow a future adventure. If flavor is indeed what you want, consider some of the following ideas:

1. The people of the city have a secret

- A new gold mine outside of town
- A hidden underground pool with fabulous qualities
- The citizens plan an insurrection
- The people are not what they appear to be, but rather polymorphed dragons, doppelgangers, or vampires
- A prophesied child has been born

2. The city is in peril

- The city's officials are ensorcelled
- A nearby orc tribe frequently stages raids
- A powerful group of warriors extorts wealth from the city
- A killer stalks the streets
- Crime in general runs rampant
- Drought/famine/plague threatens the city
- The city's rulers are oppressive and corrupt

3. The people in the city have some unique quality

- They speak with a peculiar accent or slang
- They love a unique sport
- They hate a certain race or class
- They worship a god who demands blood sacrifices
- Everyone born there has some level of psionic power
- They descend from some important figure in history

4. The town has a unique quality

- It is haunted
- It lies atop an ancient ruin of importance
- It was built upon an area of great magical power
- The layout of the streets forms a magical symbol or a map to an ancient treasure
- The builders put all the buildings on stilts for when the annual floods come
- The buildings line the edge of a cliff
- The city is built on rafts floating on a river or lake

Of course, you can do even stranger things than those mentioned here—cities in the clouds, underwater, or peopled entirely with cloakers—but such places are usually so special that they wouldn't be something that you'd just spring on the PCs haphazardly. They would be the focus of a great deal of attention.

A CITY AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS

Taking things one step further, a city can become a temporary (or permanent) home for the adventuring PCs. With this level of detail, the PCs don't just find out what's going on in the city, they actually become involved. If the city is ruled by an evil tyrant, it won't take long before the PCs, now citizens affected by his oppression and invested in their homes, take action. If the city is threatened by a bandit king and his bugbear allies, the PCs get involved.

Compared to a city that is simply visited a few times, a city where the PCs actually live demands a high level of detail. The DM needs to know much more about the community than who rules the place and who runs the inn. Suddenly, shopkeepers, guards, and commonfolk need some detail.

Although you can fill this city with all the interesting NPCs and various bits that you want (and you should), there are two important decisions you need to make right away, before the PCs even get there.

1. Size. The most important factor when designing a city you know will be the PCs' long-term base of operations is how big it is. Size determines the amount of available cash flowing through the city at any given moment,

and the value of equipment available as well. If the PCs are high enough level so that they are going to want to be able to purchase a *+2 keen longsword,* they're going to need to go a small city (at least) to do so.

Use the following table as a rough guide, based solely on the value of equipment likely to be sold or desired by the PCs:

Average Level	Minimum City Size
1-2	Village
3-6	Large Town
7-13	Small City
14-18	Large City
19+	Metropolis

2. Alignment/Outlook. There is no right or wrong choice when it comes to the overall alignment of the city, but it is important to consider. The most obvious and straightforward choice is to have the city be a generally good and lawful place. Why? It's not required, but it is often desirable to have the PCs develop a sense of attachment to the city. The possibility of their home being threatened can be a useful motivator for further adventures. Additionally, a good and lawful place is likely to offer them a feeling of security. Knowing that they can sleep soundly there, trust the merchants, and walk the streets safely is not a bad thing. If the PCs always feel threatened, they might end up getting weary of the environment and the campaign.

On the other hand, there is something to be said for forcing the PCs—at least for a while—to base themselves in hostile territory. The classic example of this occurs when the PCs are deep underground and are forced to use a drow or kuo-toa city to resupply themselves and gain information. In such a place, they have to watch their backs as much as if they were in a dungeon setting. It can give a whole new feel to going into town for some supplies. Other possible examples of such a situation include a city in a land that is either wholly evil or simply at odds with the PCs' home kingdom. Even a city under the rule of a despot can feel like the PCs are behind enemy lines, and this can be fun, too. More often than not, such settings are more appropriate for a city with a reoccurring role in the campaign, and not the actual long-term home of the PCs.

Fleshing it Out

After you've made these basic choices, you've got a whole city to populate. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* helps you figure out the levels and classes of the prominent people in town. Keep in mind that people who live in cities often congregate into groups. That means that a city of any size is going to have within it guilds, organizations, and other groups of interesting like-minded people. Guilds of thieves, mages, merchants, and craftsmen are simple and straightforward. Groups of worshipers, whether faithful servants of the main deity revered in the town or cultists hiding in the shadows, also serve as interesting organizations. Orders of knighthood, secret societies, and brotherhoods of monks are more examples of details you can add to a city to give it character and personality all its own.

You needn't develop the city all at once. As the PCs need a new area of the city fleshed out, you can provide it for them. You don't have to detail every building in town—only those the PCs are likely to visit. Start with the basics (a place to stay, a place to buy needed goods, a temple, and so on), and expand from there. When you determine that next week the PCs are going to need to find a place to repair the enchanted harp they've found, you can create the Musical Emporium, but don't bother doing it before then.

Think about your PCs when you're developing the city that will be their home. Every character should have a place to go, based on their race, their class, or some interest they have. Remember, people in cities are prone to gather into like-minded groups. Some roles are easy. Clerics go to the local temple of their god. A wizard finds a like-minded group, probably a mage's guild of some type, or at least a well-stocked library. Sometimes, large cities will have a dwarven quarter, an elven refuge, and so on. Some races, like half-orcs, might be looked down upon outside certain districts. Bards might look for a tavern or a performance hall where they can sing or play (or enjoy the performance of others). Fighters can find a training academy that teaches fighting skills to soldiers, mercenaries, and gladiators alike. Paladins might join a noble order and monks might as well (although the order is likely to be different in many ways). Perhaps sorcerers spend time with wizards, or perhaps they find a wizard's approach to magic too stuffy and bookish and go out on their own. Druids, rangers, and barbarians in particular can feel a little out of place in a city, so be particularly aware of them, and be sure to find ways to keep them feeling included. Remember that not every character need be a stereotype, however. Sometimes a ranger might like to spend time in a city to get away from the responsibilities he has in the woods.

The authorities of the city might not only get to know the PCs who live there, but they might even come to rely on them in tough times. Once their power and skills are known to the locals, those in need will come to them with pleas for help. When the city is threatened, the town council might come to the PCs on their knees. These are all interesting ways to start adventures. Whenever the PCs "pin themselves down" so that people can find them, new opportunities for introducing adventures present themselves. The PCs see injustice being done in their home town, they see monstrous threats stacked against people they come to know, or see that it is their own homes on the line, and they gain a whole new motivation. In short, having the PCs settle down in a city is good for the campaign.

Parts 2 and 3

Now that we've looked at cities generally, in the next part of this series, we'll see what it takes to put together an entire fantasy city. In part 3, we'll look at placing adventures in a city and the differences between city adventures and those set in more conventional locales.

Roleplaying NPCs

by Johnn Four

Vivid and entertaining NPCs are a cornerstone of great adventures. Roleplaying NPCs so they come to life before your players' eyes can raise the enjoyment and reputation of your campaign to new levels, helping your players feel more a part of an ongoing story. Plus, players often respond to their DM's good roleplaying with enthusiastic roleplaying of their own. It's a good way to help draw quiet and self-conscious players out of the shadows and into the game. If you find that the prospect of "acting" before a group of friends has you a bit nervous, set your fears aside. Roleplaying NPCs well is not about delivering the best lines or winning an Oscar. Memorable performances are based on getting the players' imaginations working for them—and you. This is easier to accomplish than it sounds, and there are many tricks and techniques you can use. This article discusses many of these techniques, organizing them by the different stages of gameplay: developing your NPCs, running the encounter, and post-game appraisal.

DEVELOPING YOUR NPCS

Spend some time developing your NPCs before your next game session. Starting with a blank slate in the middle of an encounter puts a lot of pressure on you to create interesting characters on the fly under the burning gaze of your players and usually results in generic or stereotypical NPCs. So do yourself a favor and get into the habit of fleshing out your NPCs beyond their ability scores and basic statistics before game play begins. This doesn't mean you have to spend hours developing each character in your campaign. Use the following tips to quickly generate compelling NPCs in a short amount of time.

Give Each NPC Three Traits

A trio of traits doesn't take long to conjure up on the spot, yet they provide a firm foundation from which you can build unique and entertaining NPCs.

If a character is good aligned, give him two positive traits and one negative trait. You'll find that the negative trait often spurs more roleplaying ideas and opportunities than the two positive traits. Nobody is perfect, and the mix of good and bad elements helps create believable, well-rounded characters.

If the NPC is evil, give her two negative or evil traits and one positive trait, for the same reasons given above. Plus, revealing an evil NPC's positive trait to the players can add shades of gray to your campaign and give the PCs a reason to pause before unsheathing their weapons.

Another important factor to consider when developing your NPCs is scale. Provide minor NPCs with minor traits and give major NPCs major traits. Although you can break this rule occasionally, keep in mind that it helps maintain overall campaign balance while minimizing planning time. For example, while you might give an innkeeper the two positive traits of down-to-earth and jovial and the negative trait of mistreating his staff, you wouldn't normally give him traits like Olympic athlete, saintly, and megalomaniac.

Give Each NPC a Dream

What does the character wish she could do if money were no object? Sail around the world? Be Queen? Become a famous artist? Dreams are fantastic tools for fleshing out a character's personality without much planning or forethought.

Dreams can be turned into long-term goals for the NPC, and they might be reflected in the NPC's main interests and hobbies. For example, an NPC who dreams of being royalty might study heraldry, stay current on all the royal gossip, and collect royal paraphernalia.

Unrealized or thwarted dreams can be used to create darker personalities. What will an NPC do if the PCs crush or ridicule his dream? How have years of denial and hopeless longing affected the NPC's mind? If the NPC has one last chance to achieve his dream, to what lengths will he go to do so? These are all interesting questions to consider when developing your NPC's personality.

Give Each NPC a Secret

A secret can give an edge to your NPC and provide you with some interesting roleplaying opportunities. The more relevant a character's secret is to the current encounter, the more tension and roleplaying opportunities there will be. If a discussion borders near the character's secret, attempt to change the topic, act uncomfortable, or pretend to be evasive. Dreams and negative personality traits can be excellent sources of secrets.

Give Each NPC a Quirk

A quirk is an odd character trait that makes an NPC distinguishable, and like the options above, they can provide you with some interesting roleplaying opportunities. Instead of fretting about witty parley or poetic lines, you can act out the NPC's quirk. This helps players identify, remember, and picture who they're dealing with, and it makes DMing an NPC a lot more fun!

Give Each NPC an Encounter Goal

Clear NPC goals give you a strong anchor to guide your acting, so decide what each of your NPCs want from a particular encounter and the PCs.

For example, let's say one of your NPCs is a plump, jovial innkeeper who mistreats his staff. When the PCs walk into the inn, what does he say and do? He might welcome the PCs, but that makes for pretty uninteresting roleplaying—most innkeepers would welcome new guests. He could boss his staff around, but that's not being jovial and doesn't bring the PCs into the scene. Now let's assign him a goal: to make money. Because the innkeeper mistreats his staff, the service is going downhill and business has fallen. As a result, the innkeeper is desperate for money. Your goal then, while roleplaying the innkeeper, is to get as much money out of the PCs as possible.

You can pursue this goal in a number of different ways. The innkeeper could try to con or outright rob the PCs, or he might be more subtle and simply triple his prices. No matter what you decide, you suddenly have a mission that will help guide what the NPC says, how he acts, and what he might do when he's not directly interacting with the PCs.

With a goal for each NPC, you have purpose and direction to your roleplaying, making your NPCs more compelling and entertaining both for you and your players.

Give Each NPC a Prop

Giving NPCs props is a fun and easy way to bring NPCs to life instantly. A prop is an imaginary object that you can portray through body language, miming, and acting, such as a heavy visor, an over-full bucket, or ice-covered ground.

For example, picture how you'd portray a thirsty dwarf wielding his lucky tankard in a noisy tavern. Perhaps he dramatically downs his drink in four lusty gulps when the PCs first meet him. Then he yells for more ale and shakes the cup menacingly at any staff member who walks near until a refill arrives. He might also use the tankard to punctuate his sentences when he gets emotional, drenching the PCs in the process and resulting in more hollers for refills.

Give Each NPC a Mood

Achieve additional character depth by assigning moods to your NPCs. This is a great way to keep recurring NPCs fresh and interesting because mood can change between encounters. Start by assigning each NPC a base mood and then adjust as you see fit depending on the PCs' actions.

If an encounter involves one or more groups of NPCs, assign a mood to each group. Although individual moods might vary, a group usually emotes the common or average mood of its members.

Create Curses and Praises

One of the most difficult aspects of roleplaying NPCs is knowing how to act when they become upset or excited. Using real world curses, threats, and praises can wreck your game world's verisimilitude. It's easy to become flustered, indecisive, or hesitant when you don't know what to say in character. The solution is to decide beforehand how your NPC curses and praises. Come up with a handful of expressions the NPC uses when she is excited or angry. These can be unique to the particular NPC, or they might be more general ones that many NPCs of the same race and culture use. Here are some ideas:

- The names of gods
- The mention of famous or infamous NPCs
- The mention of monster types
- Made-up nonsense words or phrases
- An action or command

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

There are a number of things you can do during actual game play to help you roleplay your NPCs well. Hopefully you've spent a little bit of time developing your NPCs beyond their statistics using the tips presented above; if so, you'll find this section much more useful. The techniques discussed in this section will help you further flesh out your planned encounters and NPCs.

Pause and Collect Your Thoughts

Before encounters with NPCs, especially important ones, take a minute to do a little planning. Collect your thoughts and refresh your memory about the encounter and the NPCs involved. Once things are clear in your mind, begin the encounter. Unless a fast pace is crucial (such as a chase scene), your game won't suffer from these short pauses. Players can spend the brief time roleplaying with each other or doing character updates and preparations while they wait.

Picture the Scene and NPCs Clearly in Your Mind

Imagine the scene in as much detail as possible. Get a strong idea of the space—the dimensions, layout, and surroundings—as well as the NPCs involved in the encounter.

Picture the furnishings, the lighting, the floor or ground, and the entrances and exits. Next, imagine where the NPCs are located and what they're doing when the PCs enter. Imagine how the NPCs are dressed, what things the PCs might notice right away, and any props present that NPCs could use, such as everyday items, tools, equipment, or traps. Quickly review the traits, mood, props, dreams, and goals of important NPCs. It isn't necessary to do this for every NPC involved in the encounter; doing so would take too much time and allow your players to lose focus and interest in the game.

Picturing the NPCs and the scene in your head is a tricky exercise at first, but it gets easier with practice and becomes automatic over time. Pretend you're playing a video game and picture the scene through a "god-view"

or top-down camera. It's a powerful technique because it gives you a detailed feel for the encounter and a complete overview of the situation for fast, on-the-fly decision making. There's no need for painful research pauses or wooden descriptions because it's all clearly pictured in your head. This technique helps you portray NPCs with realistic actions, reactions, and tactics and gives you a greater ability to adapt to unexpected actions the PCs might make.

For example, the player characters barge in on a group of off-duty guards who are sitting around killing time. Without pausing you say, "The room is full of guards who react quickly to your sudden appearance and draw their weapons—roll initiative!"

However, if you gave the situation a minute of your time before revealing what's happening, questions might pop into your head to help flesh out the scene:

- What were the guards doing before the PCs entered?
- What would be in a room where guards spend their off-duty time?
- Who are the guards, not as stereotypes, but as individuals?

This time, after taking a brief minute to collect your thoughts and organize your papers for a potential combat, you say, "You barge into a small, dim room that reeks of unwashed bodies. It's covered by thin rugs and tapestries made grimy from years of smoke. Several unshaven men are playing cards while a few others lounge on dirty couches. After their surprise wears off, the guards quickly recover their wits. Those who were playing cards jump out of their chairs, sending the game table and poker chips flying into the air. Other guards dive behind couches, and you can hear the cranking sounds of crossbows being loaded. One guard, bearing two stripes on the shoulders of his unbuttoned leather jerkin, continues to lounge on his couch, looks you up and down while flipping a poker chip in the air, and sneers like you're no threat to him. Another guard, bearing an ugly scar on his cheek and wearing a red jerkin with two stars on it demands 'Who are you? I'll have your hides for this—I was winning that hand!'"

Descriptions like these always come off better in articles than they do in real life . . . except when you have a clear and detailed mental picture of what's going on, and then they come naturally. Give it a try.

Use Your Body

Use your whole body when portraying NPCs. Your players will reflect your energy with enthusiastic PC portrayals of their own. If space permits, stand up, move around, and mimic some of the NPC's actions. Otherwise, look for ways to move your body and facial features while sitting to convey an NPC's personality. Sometimes, all it takes is a single bit of body language to create a memorable NPC, such as Spock's single raised eyebrow.

Body language is a boon for shy DMs or for those who don't feel comfortable speaking in character. Some people naturally express themselves with their bodies rather than spoken word, so body language is a great alternative.

When acting out NPCs through body language, be sure that you do not make players uncomfortable. Avoid touching players, even if mimicking a handshake for example, or invading a player's personal space at the game table.

Use Your Voice

Voice tone and volume are excellent NPC tools. A monotone DM generates yawns from her players, but one who conveys the personality of her NPCs through voice control generates player interest.

A DM can modulate her voice simply by using different volumes and tones. Try experimenting with your volume by speaking in a whisper or louder than normal. For a variation in tone try speaking in a hard, unbending voice, a commanding, confident voice, or a soft, nervous voice.

Using accents is a classic voice technique. If done well, accents create colorful NPC, but if done poorly, they can jeopardize the atmosphere of the game. Four keys to great accents are consistency, mimicry, experimentation, and practice. No matter how cliché an accent is, if consistently used, players will accept it and eventually associate it with the NPC. Mimicking accents you hear and read is a great learning exercise that leads to experimentation as you try variations for the different races and cultures of your world. Once you've picked an accent to use in-game, practice by repeating commonly used words and phrases out loud until you've achieved consistency.

Minimize Dice Rolls

Frequent dice rolling tends to disrupt the flow of roleplaying, especially if you're running several NPCs, acting out a tough role, or trying to outwit the PCs with your parley. It's best to roleplay things with the players instead of calling for frequent skill checks. This means giving players clues about NPC motives, secrets, and knowledge through your NPC portrayal and acting. Demonstrate an NPC's weaknesses and fears through body language, imaginary props, and voice.

Alternatively, allow social skill checks, but lump a bunch of information into each result rather than rolling for a series of revelations. It's best to do a little roleplaying first to set the scene and impart an introductory batch of information to the players, and then make the skill checks and convey a big chunk of information. Follow this up with some more roleplaying. Not only does conversation flow much better this way, it also helps players stay in character. For more advice on social skills like Bluff and Diplomacy, see *Dragon Magazine* issue #303.

Be Liberal with Roleplaying Experience Points

If you set one or more goals for the PCs at the beginning of an encounter, and the PCs succeed in overcoming the challenges, reward them for their efforts. For example, if the players' mission is to trick a rich noble into telling them an important secret, and they succeed, give them equivalent XP as if they've defeated the noble in combat, or some ratio thereof depending on your campaign preferences. This generosity will encourage more roleplaying in the

10 NPC QUIRKS

1. Absently calls people by different names when speaking with them
2. Corrects others as they speak
3. Always plugs her favorite politician, guild, royal family member, or noble
4. Snorts when he laughs
5. Avoids eye contact
6. Bets on anything
7. Belches with gusto
8. Chews lips
9. Has an annoying nasal voice
10. Often forgets what she is talking about mid-sentence

future and thereby gives you more opportunity to perfect your own roleplaying talents.

POST-GAME APPRAISAL

Perform a brief self-appraisal after each game session to assess your performance. This is a private evaluation, so be honest with yourself. The better you pinpoint areas of success and areas of concern, the faster your roleplaying skills will improve.

Here are some questions to ask yourself.

- Were you sufficiently prepared? Did you have enough NPC information ready before the encounter so that you could slip into character without much effort? Was your NPC information organized and accessible during the chaos of game play?
- How was your acting? Did you create NPCs that were distinctive? Did you find that speaking in character came easily? If not, what would it take to help you in this area? Short scripts, practice, charts? Did you use body language? What kind of body language came naturally to you? Facial expressions, body movement, or physically acting out a situation? If body language was difficult, what could you do to make it easier? Practice, watch characters in movies, experiment in front of a mirror?
- How did the players react to your NPCs? Were they excited, bored, engrossed, or neutral? If the players didn't react much to your NPCs, consider putting more enthusiasm into your performance. If they reacted well, note which NPCs they enjoyed interacting with and what you think was the key to those successes.
- Who do you think were your best NPCs? What made them the best? Who were your worst NPCs? What made these NPCs more challenging to portray?

Keep a notebook and jot down your answers to these questions. Then, review the notebook during your next planning stage and just before game sessions to remind you which things to continue doing and which things to avoid. A notebook helps prevent you from repeating mistakes and shows how much progress you've made over time.

Portraying NPCs well is important for making your adventures come alive. Dastardly villains, helpless victims, and intriguing characters will keep your players coming back for more. Setting a good example will also encourage your players to roleplay better and participate more. Running compelling NPCs is not about memorizing lines or being an award-winning actor; it's about developing interesting characters, imagining the scene vividly in your mind, and then throwing yourself into the roles you've created. Use all the tools at your disposal—planning, imagination, voice, body, assessment, and enthusiasm—and soon you'll be DMing memorable, fantastic NPCs.

10 NPC ENCOUNTER GOALS

1. To guard her secret
2. To protect his family
3. To scam gold
4. To get the PCs to leave as soon as possible
5. To gain an advantage for her employer
6. To keep the PCs away from his treasure
7. To pretend to be somebody else
8. To earn the PCs' sympathy
9. To get the PCs to reveal information
10. To earn a good tip

Questions and Answers

by Skip Williams

This month, the Sage takes a look at questions arising from the *Book of Vile Darkness* and also considers some questions about feats and other special abilities. If you'd like to send questions to the Sage, he can be reached at TSRsage@aol.com.

When you apply the bone creature template from the *Book of Vile Darkness*, what happens to the creature's challenge rating?

The CR is the same as the base creature, +1.

There is an Alchemy DC (25) listed for liquid pain in the *Book of Vile Darkness*. Is an Alchemy check required when using a *pain extractor* or casting the *liquid pain* spell? Is the check needed to change what comes from the magic item or spell to turn it into the drug? If so, is the process also needed to change liquid pain into whatever form is needed when using it for experience (for example, pain as power)?

Both the *pain extractor* item and the *liquid pain* spell produce the agony (liquid pain) drug. Agony drug produced by either method is ready to use and does not require an Alchemy check.

An alchemist also can make agony according to the rules for creating any other alchemical item. Creating pain alchemically is usually slower and more expensive than using the spell or the item.

No Alchemy check is required to use pain as power.

The description of the Dark Speech mentions that you can hold conversations with it if you are knowledgeable in the language. Does that mean you need to take the feat and also spend skill points (on the Speak Language skill) to speak in the Dark Speech? Or is taking the feat enough?

You cannot learn the Dark Speech simply by taking the Speak Language skill. You have to take the feat instead. Taking the feat is enough—when you take the feat you learn the Dark Speech without spending any skill points.

The discussion of corrupt spells on page 78 in the *Book of Vile Darkness* says corrupt spells have no material components. However, the *apocalypse from the sky* and *evil weather* spells are corrupt spells with material components (an artifact and amethysts, respectively). Are they supposed to be focuses?

A focus is a material component (just not a material component that is consumed in the casting of the spell). The two spell descriptions are correct, page 78 is wrong; however, the artifact needed for the *apocalypse from the sky* spell is a focus and is not consumed when the spell is cast.

Page 78 of the *Book of Vile Darkness* says that the corruption cost for casting a corrupt spell occurs after the spell ends, and thus there are no corrupt spells with a permanent duration. The *consume likeness* and *forbidden speech* spells are both corrupt spells and are permanent. When are the corruption costs for these spells paid?

The spell descriptions are correct. In each case, the caster pays the corruption cost upon completing the spell (rather than when the spell ends).

If a spellcaster is immune to ability drain (such as by being undead), can he still cast corrupt spells? I seem to recall that there is a spell somewhere that can protect someone from ability damage as well, so how about in that case? Can you heal corruption costs?

The *negative energy protection* spell prevents the loss of ability scores and levels to attacks that employ negative energy. A corruption cost is not a negative energy effect, and *negative energy protection* won't prevent it. While defensive special qualities in the D&D game are usually insurmountable, the corruption cost for the spell represents a direct assault on the physical and mental well-being of the caster, and anyone who casts a corrupt spell has to pay the cost, even if normally immune to ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. The act of casting a corrupt spell makes the caster briefly vulnerable to the corruption cost of the spell.

When an undead creature uses a corrupt spell with an ability damage or ability drain corruption cost, the undead creature takes the damage or the drain against its Charisma score, no matter what ability the spell normally damages or drains. If the damage or drain reduces the undead creature's Charisma to 0, the creature becomes helpless until the loss of

Charisma is somehow restored or repaired. Any ability damage from a corruption cost heals at the rate of 1 point per day, just like any other ability damage. Ability drain can be healed by the appropriate spells.

Note that undead creatures with Intelligence scores can heal normal ability damage just as living creatures can. For example, a lich casts *Lahm's finger darts* and suffers 1 point of Charisma damage per dart (the spell normally damages Strength, but a lich is an undead creature, so it suffers Charisma damage instead). The Charisma damage the lich suffers heals at the rate of 1 point per day, and the lich's fingers are replaced as the Charisma damage heals.

When a spell requires both Undead and Fiend (such as *flesh ripper*), does the creature have to be an undead fiend, or is it an either/or type of thing?

While most spells require all the material components listed for them, the demon, devil, fiend, and undead components from the *Book of Vile Darkness* are special. If more than one of these are listed, the caster need satisfy only one of them.

If a character with the Dark Speech feat and a Charisma score of 15 used the Dark Speech to inspire dread, suffering 1d4 points of Charisma damage in the process, it is my understanding that the character would then be unable to use the Dark Speech again until the Charisma damage is healed, since she no longer meets the feat prerequisites. Is this correct?

Yes, that is correct. If you have a feat that has a prerequisite, you cannot use the feat if you no longer meet the prerequisite. Ability drain or ability damage can often render you unable to use your feats.

The prerequisites for the Dark Speech feat include a Charisma of 15 or higher and an Intelligence of 15 or higher. Anything that reduces Charisma or Intelligence to less than 15 renders the Dark Speech feat unusable until the loss is restored, and that includes Charisma damage from using the feat.

If a character drinks an *elixir of the Dark Speech*, does he have to meet the prerequisites for the Dark Speech to actually use the Dark Speech?

No. Consuming the elixir allows a creature to use the Dark Speech for 10 minutes. The imbiber must have enough Intelligence to actually use language (Intelligence of at least 3), but does not have to have the Dark Speech feat or meet the feat's prerequisites.

At 5th level, monks gain immunity from diseases except for "magical" ones such as mummy rot or lycanthropy. However, diseases aren't listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* as "magical." Rather, they're listed as being either normal or supernatural. Should one assume that monks are immune to all normal diseases, but not supernatural ones? Or is it that a monk is resistant to all diseases except those that require magical cures, which is the case for both the example diseases listed? This issue becomes especially important considering that all the diseases listed in the *Book of Vile Darkness* are supernatural, and there are a lot of them to catch.

The *contagion* spell produces a "magical" disease. A monk is subject to the effects of this spell, no matter what diseases the caster chooses to inflict. Monks also are susceptible to supernatural disease such as mummy rot. When the monk description says "magical disease" it means "magical or supernatural disease."

There's a sidebar on page 187 of the *Book of Vile Darkness* that deals with detecting evil. The sidebar says not all evil characters have an evil aura that registers with the *detect evil* spell or similar spell-like abilities. Does this mean your average evil fighter isn't detected? The description of the *detect evil* spell seems to indicate that any evil creature has at least a faint evil aura. For example, an evil creature has an aura strength of HD/5, and an aura strength of 1 or less is faint, so an evil fighter of 1st level has a faint evil aura, right? If that isn't true, what exactly does a *detect evil* spell detect? Is it alignment? Is it just certain monsters? I've always had difficulty hiding my villains from the PCs. They just walk around casting *detect evil* on everything until they find the villain.

Also, what is a lingering aura and how does a creature or area get one? Does an evil creature leave a trail of evil wherever it goes?

The *detect evil* spell detects evil auras. As you point out, any evil creature (that is, any creature with an evil alignment) has at least a faint evil aura. So, the sidebar is wrong. Note, however, that it can be pretty difficult to pin down exactly where an evil aura is or which creature it belongs to.

When one first studies an area with *detect evil,* the spell only reveals the presence or absence of evil somewhere within the fairly large area the spell covers (and remember that the spell can penetrate barriers and detect auras that are in range but out of sight, inaccessible, or both). Only after three consecutive rounds of scanning the same area does a *detect evil* spell reveal the locations of any evil auras in that area. If the caster should scan a different area, she has to start the whole process all over again. Thus, an evil villain who moves around a little bit may rouse the PCs' suspicion, but the PCs can't be sure who or what actually goes with any particular evil aura they've detected, especially if the villain is part of a crowd.

In any case, the villains in your campaign would do well to employ some *undetectable alignment* and *misdirection* spells, both of which last a fairly long time and were meant to foil the profligate use of the various detect spells. A creature or object that has received an *undetectable alignment* spell has no aura of chaos, evil, good, or law no matter what its alignment really is. The *misdirection* spell usually doesn't last as long as *undetectable alignment,* but it allows the user to literally switch auras with some object. A clever villain can usually assume whatever aura he wants with this spell, just by managing to cast the spell when a suitable object is at hand.

Lingering auras occur when the original source of the aura is gone. For

example, an evil creature has an evil aura. If it dies, the inert body left behind has no alignment, but an aura of evil lingers in and on the body for a time. The length of time the aura lingers depends on the original strength of the aura, as noted in the *detect evil* spell description. A creature or object's aura does not "rub off" or attach itself to anything else. For example, you cannot track an evil creature by using *detect evil* to detect lingering auras of evil it leaves behind as it moves—because it doesn't leave behind any lingering aura. Likewise, if you obtain a suspect creature's equipment, you can't learn anything about that creature's alignment by studying it with a *detect evil* spell (but you could learn something from a piece of the creature itself).

The Rapid Shot feat description says you get two attacks at -2 as a full-round action. When your base attack becomes +6/+1 do you get a third attack after the Rapid Shot attacks? The way I see it, you get one or the other, but Rapid Shot gives you +4/+4. If this is so, doesn't having multiple attacks make Rapid Shot obsolete?

The Rapid Shot feat allows you to make one extra attack with a projectile weapon at your base attack bonus (not two attacks). To use the feat, you must use the full attack action, and all the attacks you make during that full attack action suffer a -2 penalty. If your base attack bonus is +6, you make two attacks with the full attack action at +6/+1, if you use Rapid Shot with that full attack action, you make 3 attacks at +4/+4/-1.

How good is regeneration at preserving the life of a creature? Suppose a party of adventurers lacking any holy or blessed weapons defeats a pit fiend. They would have racked up a bunch of subdual damage until the pit fiend fell unconscious, but dealt no real damage to the fiend. They then proceed to hack up the pit fiend to make sure it's dead. Would this kill the creature? What if they hacked off its head? Would the largest part, no matter how small, regrow into the pit fiend? Pit fiends suffer real damage only from holy or blessed weapons. Does that mean damage from a *lightning bolt* cast at the unconscious pit fiend would also regenerate in time?

Regeneration is very, very good at preserving a creature's life. Unless the creature's description specifically says otherwise, dismemberment won't kill a regenerating creature. For example, a pit fiend won't die if you render it unconscious and chop off its head, or even dice it up into tiny pieces. To kill a pit fiend you must damage it with a holy or blessed weapon of at least +3 magical enhancement (holy water works, too). To actually kill the pit fiend, you must deal enough damage with a holy or blessed weapon of at least +3 magical enhancement to reduce the fiend's hit points to -10, or you must deal a successful coup de grace to the pit fiend with such a weapon.

Parts separated from a regenerating creature wither away and die unless they are reattached to the creature, so if you chop the pit fiend into small bits and scatter those bits, all but one will eventually die, but the surviving piece grows back into a pit fiend.

As "Sage Advice" has noted before, regeneration is ineffective against some kinds of assaults, such as death effects or other special effects that cause death, massive damage, drowning, starvation, or having one's Constitution score reduced to 0. I suppose a really persistent attacker could keep hacking way at a pit fiend's unconscious body until the creature starved to death.

I was wondering about the effects of fast healing once a character has entered negative hit points. Does fast healing still occur? If it does, then the epic feat Fast Healing, which allows you to heal at least 3 points of damage, would allow a PC to stabilize, recover, and regain consciousness, right?

A creature with the fast healing quality regains the stated number of hit points each round, so long as it remains alive. Unlike regeneration, fast healing doesn't keep a creature from dying.

A creature with a hit point total of -1 to -9 is dying, but it's still alive. Fast healing (and regeneration) restore lost hit points each round at the beginning of the creature's turn. Whenever a dying creature heals at least 1 point of damage, it becomes stable and eventually will regain consciousness, providing it does not suffer any additional damage.

When you imbue another creature with a spell, using either the *imbue with spell ability* spell or the divine disciple class ability (from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), can you imbue a metamagiced spell? If so, does the metamagiced spell use the real level of the spell or the higher-level spell slot the metamagiced spell consumes? For instance, can a persistent *divine favor* spell be imbued (it's only a 1st-level spell, despite the slot it requires)?

Yes. You can imbue metamagiced spells. Use the spell's higher metamagiced level to determine if the spell can be imbued. This is the case whenever a spell is transferred, stored, or duplicated somewhere. For example, when you create a magic item that uses a metamagiced spell, you must use the spell's higher metamagiced level to determine the item's costs.

The Persistent Spell feat requires a spell slot four levels higher than the base spell, so you'd need a 5th-level slot to make the 1st-level *divine favor* spell persistent. The highest-level spell that an *imbue with spell ability* caster or divine disciple can imbue is a 2nd-level spell, so neither the spell nor the class ability can imbue a persistent *divine favor* spell. D

PHIL FOGLIO'S WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL & DIXIE

HEYA! GIVE ME A DOLLAR AND I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT MERCENARIES.
FIRST OF ALL, WHAT IS A MERCENARY? IT'S SOMEONE WHO FIGHTS FOR MONEY. NOT FOR LOVE, OR HONOR, OR GOD, OR COUNTRY, JUST FOR THE MONEY.
WILL PUNCH YOU FOR 50¢
IF THEY SURVIVE, THEY GET VERY GOOD AT FIGHTING FOR MONEY, AND LEARN MANY USEFULL TRICKS.
WILL NOT PUNCH YOU FOR 50¢
© PFoglio -02
A TRUE MERCENARY IS COMPLETELY AMORAL
BUT YOU MUST FIGHT FOR ME! MY UNCLE IS AN USURPER!
HE PAID ME FIRST.
BUT HE'S A MURDERER!
SO?
AND A THIEF!
SO?
AND HE WRITES BAD CHECKS!
... uh-oh.
WHEN YOUR WAR IS OVER, A SMART RULER WILL SEND THE MERCENARIES PACKING BEFORE THEY GET BORED.
SO - NEED ANYONE KILLED TODAY?
NO.
WANT ANYONE BEAT UP?
NO.
I'LL PUNCH ED HERE FOR FIFTY CENTS.
NO!
AND WHEN YOU DO SEND THEM PACKING — PAY THEM. IN FULL. DON'T GET CUTE. I MEAN, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE HEARD SOME RECENTLY INSTALLED KING SAY—
OH, BUT I BELIEVE I HAVE DISCOVERED A SIMPLE WAY TO SAVE SOME OF THE PEOPLE'S MONEY.
HOLY COW!! IS THIS GUY DEAD OR WHAT?!
AND FINALLY, NOBODY BECOMES A MERCENARY BECAUSE THEY WANT TO. THEY DO IT BECAUSE THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE.
OH SURELY SOMETHING YOU DID IN CIVILIAN LIFE MADE MONEY.
LET'S SEE... I PUT OUT A TRADING CARD GAME... PUT IT ONLINE... RAN A GAMING STORE... WROTE SOME D20 MODULES... PRODUCED THE D&D MOVIE... DID A COMIC STRIP FOR DRAGON MAGAZINE...
... NEVER MIND.
END!

Special thanks to Art Mercenary Cheyenne Wright for this month's color work!

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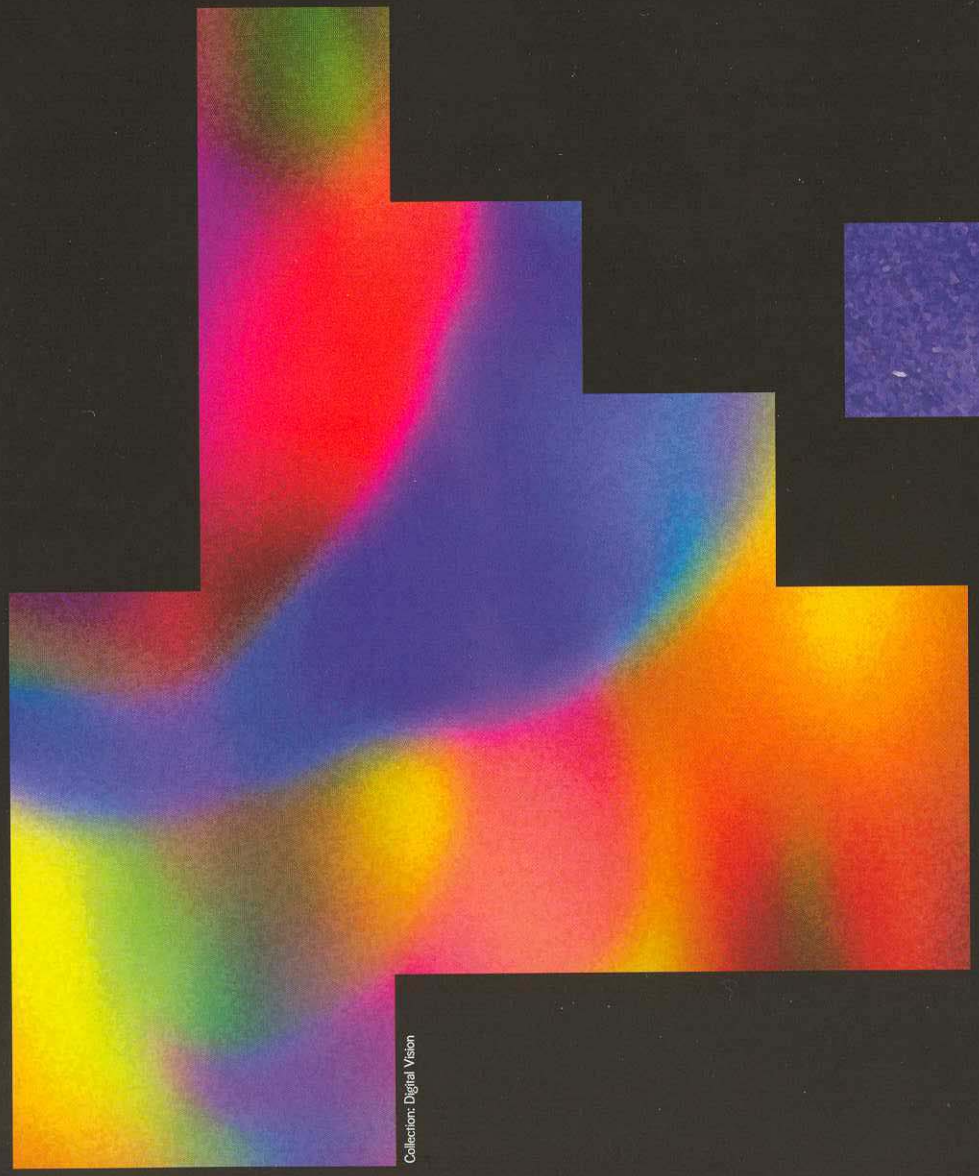
CONE AREA TEMPLATES

DRAGON 2003



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CONE AREA TEMPLATES

DRAGON 2003

Here are the cone spells from the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Magic of Faerûn* (MoF), *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* (FRCS), *Tome and Blood* (TaB), *Oriental Adventures* (OA), and the *Book of Vile Darkness* (BoVD) along with psionic effects from the *Psionics Handbook* (Psi).

Wave of Grief (BoVD)
Wave of Pain (BoVD)
Color Spray (PH)
Cone of Cold (PH)
Prismatic Spray (PH)
See Invisibility (PH)
Shout (PH)
Ice Blast (OA)
Steam Breath (OA)
Great Shout (FRCS) or (TaB)
Moonbeam (FRCS)
Moonfire (FRCS)
Balagarn's Iron Horn (MoF)
Cloud of Bewilderment (MoF)
Horizikaul's Versatile Vibration (MoF)
Mestil's Acid Breath (MoF)
Breath of the Dragon (Psi)
See Invisibility (Psi)
Stomp (Psi)

Because there are several ways to direct the area of a cone spell or monster's breath weapon, it can be hard at times to know where it has effect. When you cast a spell with a cone area of effect, you can use either cone template, and you can turn the templates over and use them in the other "direction" if you'd like. With these templates, it should be easier to make sure the spell hits as many foes as possible without catching your allies in the blast. Both of the templates provided represent 30-foot cones. Although many casters will be able to affect a greater area, it should be easy to extrapolate the spell's area of effect once you choose the template that you want to use. Note that a few cone spells have ranges other than Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels), so be sure to double check the spell's description before using the area template.

Here are the cone spells from the *Player's Handbook* (PH), *Magic of Faerûn* (MoF), *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* (FRCS), *Tome and Blood* (TaB), *Oriental Adventures* (OA), and the *Book of Vile Darkness* (BoVD) along with psionic effects from the *Psionics Handbook* (Psi).

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